MARK WAID LEINIL FRANCIS YU GERRY ALANGUILAN DAVE McCAIG

SUPERMAN BIRTHRIGHT
THE DELUXE EDITION

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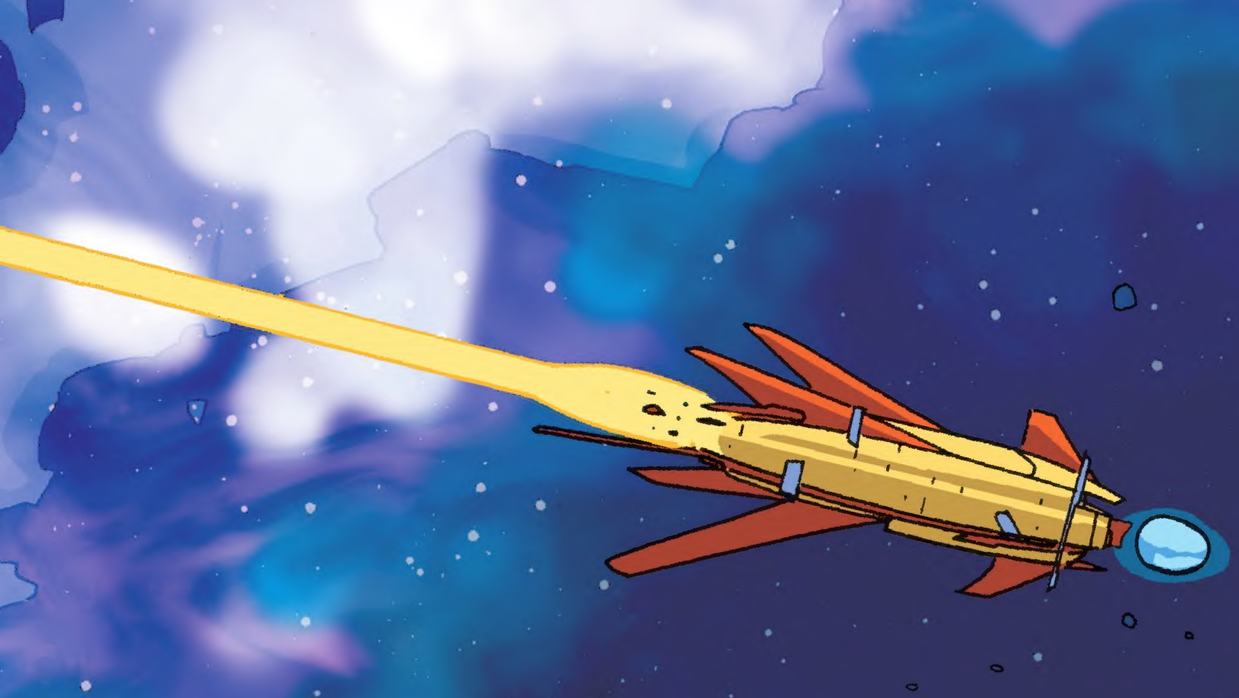

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DAVE McCAIG COLORIST COMICRAFT LETTERER

LEINIL FRANCIS YU AND GERRY ALANGUILAN
ORIGINAL SERIES AND COLLECTION COVER ARTISTS

SUPERMAN CREATED BY JERRY SIEGEL AND JOE SHUSTER
BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH THE JERRY SIEGEL FAMILY

SUPERMAN BIRTHRIGHT
THE DELUXE EDITION

DEDICATIONS

A work of this scope does not happen by itself. I want to acknowledge the contributions (and support) above and beyond from Elliot S! Maggin, Devin Grayson, Tom Peyer, and Dave McCaig.

—MARK WAID

To my beautiful and loving wife, Yai, whose immense patience and sacrifice alone kept me still and strong. Life doesn't get better than this...

—LEINIL YU

To my parents Doroteo and Juanita, and to my wife Ilyn, the real superheroes in my life.

—GERRY ALANGUILAN

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SUPERMAN: BIRTHRIGHT THE DELUXE EDITION
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INTRODUCTION

Wednesday, March 7, 2001. It's the first day of production on *Smallville*. We share a look of pure dread. What were we thinking? Jump ahead three years and we're just starting Season 4. Of course, we couldn't have done it without a ton of support from our cast and crew. But when the day finally comes to say, "That's a wrap," it'll be nice to be able to look to innovative comics like *Superman: Birthright* and know the legend will never die.

While putting together the WB television series, our main struggle was to create a believable world. First and foremost, we had to get inside Clark Kent's head. We wanted to explore the reality of what it would be like to be a teenager with superpowers. How would it affect your friendships? Your family? Your sex life?

To help us round out the world of *Smallville* we added Lex Luthor's father, Lionel, and Clark's high school reporter pal, Chloe Sullivan. More controversial was the idea that Kal-El arrives in a meteor shower of Kryptonite. It'd be used in multiple ways. For instance, to infect people and give them all sorts of abilities, but also induce the usual weakening effects on Clark, who was still learning to embrace and control his own powers. Although fans of the show have a love-hate regard for the "freaks of the week" that Kryptonite creates, Clark needs to fight superhuman "villains." It would be pretty darn boring to do 100 hours of television with Clark doing farm chores and pining over Lana. Wouldn't it?

Conflict is what defines the crux of every good story. Here, we share a common goal with Mark Waid: to focus on the forces that create the man who will become a hero and the man who will become his archnemesis. Beginning with Clark's origin, Waid seamlessly takes us on a journey that is stylish, hardnosed, timely, and moving. From Clark Kent's worldly travels to his return to Smallville and finally his tenure in Metropolis, each issue poignantly marks Clark's passage. One of the coolest sequences shows Clark soaring over a herd of wild zebras stampeding across an African plain. The image is as beautiful as it is inspiring.

The *Superman: Birthright* series strives to respect Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster's vision but also to enrich it. Adding Lex's albeit brief upbringing in Smallville is a nice twist that is nicely paid off when Lex comes face-to-face with Clark years later but doesn't recognize him. Watching Clark try to adjust and pull off his dual identities is also really well-handled. We actually get to see the Kents develop the persona that will mask Superman, although Clark still has to do the hard part in facing a confident Lois Lane, an overbearing Perry White, and the nebbish Jimmy Olsen.

Subtlety and characterization aside, Waid doesn't hold back and takes comic-book storytelling to the next level with a potent mix of kick-ass action, tongue-in-cheek humor, and unabashed drama. Superman's arrival is first met with glowing praise. But it's not long before Lex Luthor skews the people's minds and they turn against the Man of Steel. The tale unfolds at a breathless pace, and the ending is immensely satisfying. And when you read the final page you're left with the warm glow of wanting more.

The visual impact of *Superman: Birthright* is as fresh and dynamic as the storytelling. Leinil Francis Yu's pencils sharply craft the characters, space, and backgrounds. Gerry Alanguilan's expert inking is second to none, while Dave McCaig's broad color palette helps create the series' richly diverse landscapes. It's a winning team whose talents have contributed to making this series a nascent classic.

In a time where comic book readers and film and television viewers alike have all come to expect a new take on Superman, Krypton's last son does not disappoint in this one. It delivers a groundbreaking retelling for this generation of fans and many more to come.

Now it's your turn to enjoy the adventure. Give yourself a personal reading hiatus. Sit back, kick your feet up, and get ready to enjoy the legend once again.

ALFRED GOUGH AND MILES MILLAR

LOS ANGELES, 2004

ESCAPING GRAVITATIONAL FIELD OF KRYPTON. ACCELERATION: 762.4 BIREN/THRIBO TRAJECTORY: 23.6 AGLEN

SYSTEM ALERT!

WARNING: VELOCITY INSUFFICIENT TO COUNTER GRAVITY OF SUN.

WARNING: STARDRIVE FAILING.

WARNING: STARDRIVE OPERATING AT 68%... 42%... 11%...

ALTER TRAJECTORY POINT-TWO AGLEN.

PROJECT NEW COURSE.

WARNING: SHIELDS FAILING.

AGAIN.

WARNING: CLOAKING DEFENSES PENETRATED.

AGAIN.

HOPELESS.

IT'S HOPELESS.

WARNING: NUTRIENT STORES EXHAUSTED.

WARNING: ROGUE COMET.

WARNING: FUEL DEPLETED.

I WARNED THEM, LARA. THE BUILDING PRESSURE AT KRYPTON'S CORE... THE GROUNDQUAKE... MY FINDINGS...

...ALL *"UNDER ADVISEMENT"* BY AN ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL OF DISMISSIVE FOOLS. BY NOW, WE SHOULD HAVE A FLEET OF STARCRAFT CARRYING US ALL TO SAFETY...

...INSTEAD OF A SINGLE PROTOTYPE BARELY LARGE ENOUGH FOR OUR SON. I KNOW, JOR-EL. BUT KEEP FAITH IN WHAT WE ***HAVE*** ACCOMPLISHED...

BEEP

NAVIGATIONAL

...FOR IT IS KAL-EL'S ONLY CHANCE OF ***SURVIVAL.*** I'VE PROGRAMMED HIS SHIP'S NAVIGATIONAL INTELLIGENCE TO SEEK OUT SOME OTHER WORLD WHERE LIFE MIGHT ***THRIVE.***

"THRIVE." IN WHAT PRIMITIVE SENSE?

LARA, LOOK BEHIND ME. FOR HOW MANY ***CENTURIES*** HAVE KRYPTON'S COMPUTERS BEEN SEARCHING IN ***VAIN*** FOR SIGNS OF EXTRAGLOBAL INTELLIGENCE?

PROBING FOR EVEN THE FAINTEST TRANSMISSION ON THE STARWINDS? ***STRAINING*** TO FIND ANY ***PROOF AT ALL*** THAT WE ARE NOT ***UNIQUELY ADVANCED*** IN THE UNIVERSE?

IT DOESN'T MATTER. HE CAN'T STAY. HE'LL ***DIE*** HERE WITH US. AND ***SOON.***

HE'LL DIE OUT THERE ***ALONE. SUFFERING.***

YOU DON'T KNOW THAT.

HOW CAN YOU BELIEVE OTHERWISE?

WHAT CHOICE DO I ***HAVE?***

THERE'S NOT MUCH TIME LEFT, IS THERE?

DAYS. HOURS, PERHAPS. AND NOT A SHRED OF MEANING IN THEM.

...

FOR TEN THOUSAND ORBITS, A SHINING PLANET CIRCLED A CELESTIAL FONT OF HEAT AND LIGHT.

"THE PEOPLE OF THAT WORLD GREW TIRED OF WAR...

"...SO THEY ACHIEVED A UNITED SOCIETY."

"THEY FEARED THE UNKNOWN... SO THEY CONQUERED IT WITH MARVELS OF SCIENCE.

"THEY YEARNED FOR HEAVEN... SO THEY CREATED IT BENEATH THEIR VERY FEET."

FOR TEN THOUSAND ORBITS, A CLUMP OF DIRT CAREENED AROUND A RED DWARF STAR.

AND IT ACCOMPLISHED MIRACLES NO ONE WILL EVER REMEMBER.

THAT TABLET ON THE COUNTER. MAKE ROOM FOR IT IN THE SHIP.

THIS? WHAT IS--

IT'S A HOLOGLYPHIC CHRONICLING KRYPTONIAN HISTORY. IT WAS TO BE YOUR BIRTHCYCLE GIFT.

MAKE ROOM FOR IT *WHY?* THE LANGUAGE WILL BE DEAD, LARA. HE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO READ IT.

IT'S NOT THERE FOR HIM, MY LOVE.

IT'S THERE FOR YOU.

OUR SON. THE LAST OF THE EL FAMILY.

THE LAST SON OF KRYPTON.

LET HIM NEVER FORGET.

LARA... LARA...I CAN'T *DO* THIS. I LOVE HIM TOO MUCH. THE VARIABLES SIMPLY DON'T SUPPORT THE INCALCULABLE *GAMBLE--*

OH!

IT'S NOT A *GAMBLE*. JOR, *LISTEN* TO ME. I AM *SO FRIGHTENED*. I CANNOT *IMAGINE* KAL-EL NOT IN MY ARMS.

BUT HE DOESN'T NEED OUR *SCIENCE* NOW.

HE NEEDS OUR *COURAGE*.

QUICKLY! SECURE HIM WHILE I ACTIVATE THE STARDRIVE!

HURRY!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

INCREASING KAL'S *ODDS* AS BEST I *CAN.*

BILLIONS OF WORLDS WE KNOW *NOTHING* ABOUT. MERCIFUL RAO, LET THERE BE ONE--

YES. LIT BY A YELLOW STAR...ITS GRAVITATIONAL PULL RELATIVELY NEGLIGIBLE...

IF HE MAKES IT AT ALL, HE'LL STAND HIS BEST PROSPECTS HERE. COMPUTER, SECURE *COORDINATES.*

HE'LL *SURVIVE* IN THAT ENVIRONMENT?

SURVIVE? THE ECOLOGY WILL BE HIS *ARMOR.*

A KRYPTONIAN CELLULAR STRUCTURE WILL POSITIVELY *DRINK IN* THE RADIATION OF A STAR THAT YOUNG. ITS ENERGY WILL STRENGTHEN HIS MUSCLES... HIS SENSES, HIS *SKIN.*

HE WILL BE THAT WORLD'S MAN OF *TOMORROW.*

AND HOW FAR *AWAY* IS IT?

FAR.

PASSENGER HARNESSED... INDUCING REM STATE...

GOODBYE, MY SON.

FORGIVE ME.

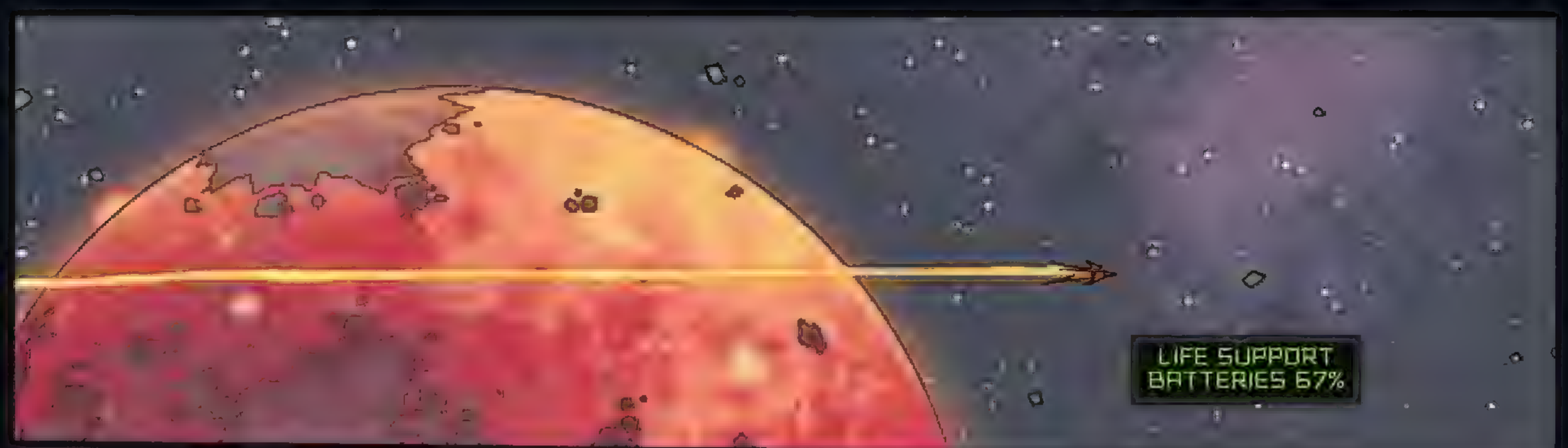
YOU'VE NOTHING TO BE SORRY FOR, MY LOVE. YOU GAVE KAL-EL ALL A FATHER CAN GIVE HIS SON.

YOU GAVE HIM EVERY CHANCE.

BUT WILL THAT BE ENOUGH?

WE'LL NEVER KNOW.

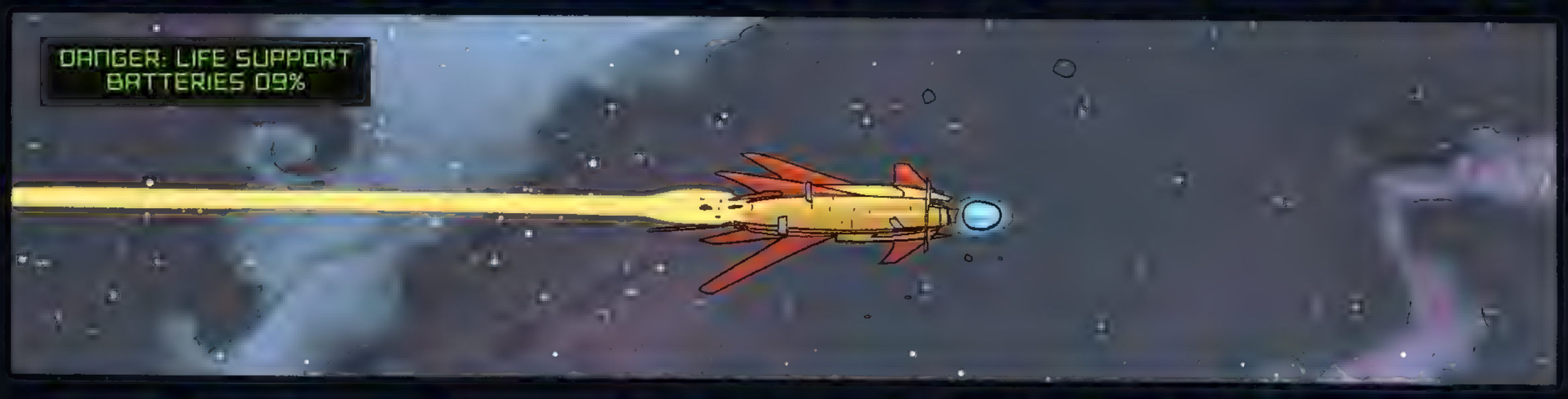
LIFE SUPPORT
BATTERIES 89%



DC COMICS PROUDLY PRESENTS

THE STORY OF KRYPTON'S LAST SON

SUPERMAN:



BIRTHRIGHT

CLOAKING ACTIVATED.

WELCOME TO:
SMALLVILLE
KANSAS
POPULATION:

GET DOWN!

25 YEARS LATER.

WEST AFRICA.

MR. KOBE ASURU?

I--I *AM*... BUT WHO ARE--?

LATER. I WANT TO FOLLOW THAT CAR.

NO. MOVE AND WE WILL SHOOT.

THAT REALLY WON'T HELP ANYBODY.

YOU DO REALIZE THOSE GUNMEN ARE *ESCAPING*...?

SILENCE. LIKE THEM, YOU CAME FROM OUT OF ***NOWHERE.*** KOBE ASURU HAS ***MANY*** ENEMIES. HOW ARE WE TO BE SURE YOU ARE NOT ANOTHER ***OF*** THEM?

NO WEAPONS. PASSPORT UNDER THE NAME OF *"CLARK KENT."* PRESS PASS FROM THE ***GHANA DISPATCH--***

--THOUGH THAT COULD BE A ***COVER.*** YOU SPEAK OUR LANGUAGE NOTABLY ***WELL*** FOR AN ***AMERICAN,*** MR. KENT.

I'M A GOOD LISTENER.

AND WHAT IS THIS? A COMPUTER OF SOME SORT?

OF... SOME SORT. PLEASE BE CAREFUL WITH THAT.

I MEAN MR. ASURU NO HARM, MISS.

NONE AT ALL. IN FACT...

...I'VE COME TO ***TALK...AND*** LISTEN...UNLIKE HIS WOULD-BE ***ASSASSINS.***

NO WONDER YOU'VE RECRUITED ***BODYGUARDS,*** MR. ASURU.

HAD THEM FORCED ***UPON*** ME IS MORE ACCURATE, MR. KENT. GYAMFI, YAO, AND MY SISTER, ***ABENA.*** AND CALL ME ***KOBE.***

CLARK. IT'S MORE THAN AN ***ASSIGNMENT*** TO MEET THE GHURI TRIBE'S FAVORITE SON, KOBE--IT'S AN ***HONOR.*** YOU'RE FAST BECOMING A LEGENDARY ***ACTIVIST*** IN THIS PART OF THE COUNTRY...

...BUT TO BE HONEST, I'M NOT SURE I'M FULLY CLEAR ON WHAT YOU'RE FIGHTING ***FOR.***

THEN LET US ***SHOW*** YOU. FOLLOW ME.

TO THE GHURI TRIBE.

BUT NOT TO TRIBAL*ISM*.

DEFINED AS...? I DIDN'T THINK RACIAL BARRIERS EXISTED HERE.

THEY DON'T. THEREFORE, IN THE ABSENCE OF RACISM, MAN--SADLY--TENDS TO FIND OTHER WAYS TO DISCRIMINATE.

IT IS THE WAY OF AFRICA. DIVISIONS ARE DRAWN--AND BATTLES ARE FOUGHT--ALONG TRIBAL LINES.

IS THAT WHAT THE *SHOOTING* WAS ABOUT? A TERRITORIAL CLASH?

PROBABLY-- THOUGH THE *REAL* THREAT IS MORE *INSIDIOUS*. THE *TRUE* THREAT COMES IN HAVING OUR *IDENTITY* STOLEN. TAKE THIS CHILD'S *TEXTBOOK* AS AN *EXAMPLE*.

WE GHURI HAVE LONG BEEN SUBSERVIENT TO THE NEIGHBORING *TURAABA* TRIBE. THEY HOLD THE *WEALTH* OF THE REGION.

TURAABA
TURAABA
TURAABA
AFRICA
WEST AFRICA
ST AFRICA

"AND THEY ARE OUR ONLY LEGITIMATE SOURCE OF *EMPLOYMENT*. FOR MANY YEARS, WE HAVE CLEANED THEIR FINE HOUSES, SHOPPED THEIR MARKETS, ATTENDED THEIR SCHOOLS."

AND THUS WE HAVE RAISED A GENERATION OF CHILDREN WHO SPEND THEIR DAYS STEEPED IN *TURAABA CULTURE* WHILE THEIR *OWN* IS *MARGINALIZED*.

CHILDREN WHO ARE TOLD BY *WORD* AND BY *CONTEXT* THAT *THEY* ARE AN *INFERIOR PEOPLE*.

TURAABA
Yesterday
and
Tomorrow

AND THAT IS WHAT WE MUST *CHANGE*... *WILL* CHANGE. WHEN WE LOSE OUR *PRIDE*, WE LOSE *OURSELVES*.

AT DAY'S END, *WHO* WE ARE IS *ALL* WE ARE. WHICH BEGS THE QUESTION, MR. KENT...

...WHO EXACTLY ARE *YOU*?

HA! ABENA, MANNERS!

THAT'S ALL RIGHT, KOBE. I'D BE SUSPICIOUS OF STRANGERS, *TOO*, IF I HAD A BROTHER WHO WAS BEING *SHOT* AT BY PASSING MOTORISTS.

FREELANCE REPORTER. AS YOU SAW FROM MY *CREDENTIALS* WHEN YOU...YOU KNOW...TURNED MY *BACKPACK* INSIDE OUT...

...I'VE FILED STORIES FOR SMALL NEWSPAPERS ON PRETTY MUCH EVERY *CONTINENT*. TO BE HONEST, THIS IS MY BIGGEST ASSIGNMENT *YET*.

THE GHANA PAPER HAS SENT ME HERE TO PROFILE KOBE, MAYBE LOOK INTO THESE *ATTACKS*.

AND DIVE IN THE PATH OF *BULLETS*.

IT'S A LIVING.

THAT'S WHAT THE OTHER ONE SAID. WHAT WAS HER NAME? LOIS SOMETHING...?

LANE? LOIS *LANE*?

AS I RECALL. SHE CAME THROUGH LAST SPRING. DO YOU KNOW HER?

NO. SHE'S *REALLY* GOOD, THOUGH. I'D *LOVE* TO MEET HER... IF I EVER GET *HOME*.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN *TRAVELING?*

LET'S SEE. GRADUATED HIGH SCHOOL IN *SMALLVILLE, KANSAS* AT 18...LEFT TWO WONDERFUL PARENTS AND A *FARM* TO STUDY *ABROAD...*

...THAT'S THEM, BY THE WAY...

...FINALLY STRUNG TOGETHER ENOUGH *VISITING STUDENT CREDITS* FROM VARIOUS UNIVERSITIES TO EARN A *BACHELOR'S* IN *JOURNALISM* JUST SHY OF 25...WHICH COMES NEXT MONTH.

SO YOU'RE A PRODUCT OF THE *AMERICAN HEARTLAND.*

PROUDLY, THOUGH NOT *ORIGINALLY.* I'M *ADOPTED.* NOT SURE *WHERE* I CAME FROM OTHER THAN IT'S... PRETTY FAR FROM *KANSAS.*

SO YOU'RE SEARCHING FOR THAT PLACE?

NO. MORE TRYING TO FIND...A PLACE *FOR* ME, MAYBE? AND RUNNING OUT OF PLACES TO *LOOK.*

PERHAPS THAT'S BBBBB

BBBEE

EEECAUSE YOU'VE TURNED AWAY FROM YOUR BIRTH LEGACY, MR. KE--

--CLARK. EMBRACE WHO YOU *ARE.* THERE'S ONLY ONE *LIKE* YOU.

TRUE *STORY.*

ANYWAY, BACK TO THE IMPORTANCE OF *TRIBAL PRIDE*. HENCE THE *PARTY*? A PUBLIC *REMINDER* OF *GHURI WAYS*...?

A *RENEWAL* OF *IDENTITY* THROUGH MUSIC AND DANCE. THROUGH CUSTOM. THROUGH THE VERY *CLOTHES* WE WEAR.

COLORS AND STYLES OF THE *TRIBE* ARE HANDED DOWN THROUGH THE GENERATIONS. WHAT WE WEAR, WE WEAR TO *CONNECT* TO THAT. TO SYMBOLIZE--AND REMIND US OF--OUR *HERITAGE*.

IT'S A FAIRLY COMMON CONCEPT, ACTUALLY. THE NAVAJO, THE FILIPINOS, THE AFGHANI... SCOTTISH CLANS WITH THEIR TARTANS...

YOU *HAVE* TRAVELED. SO WE ARE MUCH LIKE *THEM*?

YOU COULD SAY. EXCEPT, OF COURSE, FOR THE *MASKS*.

YOU DO NOT *LIKE* THEM.

I APOLOGIZE. NO DISRESPECT INTENDED, AND I RECOGNIZE THEIR SIGNIFICANCE. IT'S JUST A BIAS OF *UPBRINGING*.

WHERE I COME FROM, MASKS TEND TO SYMBOLIZE *DISTRUS*--

THROUGH THE BACK! GET KOBE OUT OF HERE! GO!

GHHUUH... HHUUHH...

DAMN IT. DAMN IT...

HIT AN *ARTERY.* MA'AM, SQUEEZE MY HAND, *HARD...*

NNNNGHHH--!

...I HAVE TO CLOSE THAT *WOUND* BEFORE...

OH, *NO.*

CLARK, YOU *IDIOT...* THIS WAS TO FORCE KOBE *OUTSIDE...!*

FIRE!

TO THE *VAN! MOVE! MOVE!*

WHAT THE *HELL...?*

HE'S WEARING A *VEST.* HE *MUST* BE...!

CLARK--?

IS ANYONE *HURT?*

NO! MY *GOD,* ARE *YOU?* YOUR *SHIRT--!*

TORE IT IN THE *BAR.* I'M FINE. GYAMFI, DRIVE!

DRIVE!

SWEET LORD...

TWO ATTEMPTS ON YOUR LIFE IN TWO *HOURS*, MY FRIEND. SOME ANGRY *TURAABA*, I TAKE IT?

HA! ALL TURAABA ARE ANGRY THANKS TO *KOBE!*

MY BROTHER LEADS US *ALL* IN THE FIGHT FOR *CHANGE*.

THE TURAABA ACCUSE US-- ACCUSE *KOBE*--OF *"FORGETTING OUR PLACE."* THEY TRY TO FRIGHTEN US BACK INTO SUBSERVIENCE.

STILL. DESPITE THEIR...*OBJECTIONS*, WE *RALLY*. WE *ORGANIZE*. AND IN TWO DAYS, OUR PEOPLE WILL MARCH TO THE CAPITAL CITY OF *MJOTA* NEARBY, JUST PRIOR TO THE NATIONAL *ELECTIONS*.

WE WILL STAND BEFORE THE MEN WHO GOVERN OUR REPUBLIC, AND WE WILL INSIST UPON *REPRESENTATION* IN THEIR *PARLIAMENT*. WE DESERVE TO BE *HEARD*, AND IF THE TURAABA DON'T *LIKE* IT...THEY'LL *LEARN* TO.

SENATOR ASU'RU

SO, CLARK...WHY HAVEN'T YOU ASKED THE QUESTION EVERY **OTHER** REPORTER ASKS: "WHY **HIM?**"

"WHY IS IT **KOBE ASURU'S** TASK TO SHOULDER THE BURDEN OF HIS **PEOPLE?**"

"DOESN'T HE KNOW HE'S RISKING HIS **LIFE** BEING A DAMNFOOL **HERO?**"

"IS HE **INSANE?**"

I BELIEVE THE TRIBE ASHANTI HAVE A SAYING...

"A CHARGE TO KEEP THEY HAVE, THE HUMAN RACE, TO GLORIFY--ALL OTHER NEIGHBORS TO SAVE, AND RAISING HUMAN ESTEEM HIGH."

HA! ***YES! EXACTLY!*** I'M NO ***HERO,*** CLARK. I SIMPLY WANT TO MAKE A ***DIFFERENCE.*** IF I DO, PERHAPS OTHERS WILL, AS WELL. PERHAPS WE'LL ALL LEAVE OUR MARK. THERE'S NOTHING MORE WONDERFUL TO HOPE FOR.

I KNOW ABENA WOULD SLEEP EASIER IF I LEFT ALL THIS ***BEHIND...*** BUT IF YOU WISH TO BE PART OF THE ***HUMAN RACE,*** YOU HAVE TO GET IN THE ***GAME.*** OTHERWISE, YOU'RE SIMPLY SITTING IN THE ***BLEACHERS,*** FEELING LIKE YOU DON'T ***FIT IN.***

WE ALL HAVE ROLES, AND THE WORLD NEVER CHANGED FOR A MAN TOO TIMID TO PLAY ***HIS*** TO THE ***ABSOLUTE LIMIT.***

GYAMFI, THE GUNMAN WILL BE GONE BY NOW. CIRCLE BACK SO THAT WE MAY TEND TO THE WOUNDED...

...THEN SEE WHAT HAPPENS ***NEXT.***

LEINIL
GERY A.

To: Martha.Kent@kent.com
Subj: Making new friends_

It's going well._

Ma, Africa is amazing. The animals here...I wish you could see them through my eyes._

THATABOY! YOU WANNA *WRESTLE?* HUH?

GRAWWRR!

HA-HA...!

We've talked about this before. Living things have a kind of glow around them. They're surrounded in a halo of colors I'd invent names for if I weren't the only one who could make them out._

I'm not sure if that halo is a soul or an aura or what. I do know that at the end of the life cycle, it fades pretty quickly, and what's left behind is...hard to look at. Empty in a way that leaves me empty, too.

But when it's there... my God, how it shines.

(I know that information's not very helpful when you're trying to explain to cattle farmer Grandpa why your son's a vegetarian, but...)_

What else? Oh--this is big. You were right. The tablet from the rocket is a book of some sort. I finally figured out how to activate it, but wouldn't you know it--

--it's more inscrutable than ever.

Still, I can't wait to show you. The images are of pretty much what we'd always imagined: people not very--and at the same time, quite--different from us._

from u_

from_

from Earth people._

It projects text I couldn't possibly decipher integrated with images of a world I don't at all remember, all barely accessible by buttons and controls completely counterintuitive to our way of thinking._

Apparently, it depicts what I'd guess are millennia of history. Discoveries are made, civilization rises, governments are formed, but there's one constant--

--the symbol.

The one on the quilt or tapestry or whatever it is that I came wrapped in.

At first I thought it was a family crest of some sort--but if it was, it certainly came to mean more than that to these people.

Wars were fought over it. Entire cities were built on it. Over the course of time, it became a...a promise. A sign of people fighting to make a better world.

A symbol of hope.

And, Ma, if that's my legacy...

...I'm blowing it._

Over the past few days, I've made friends with a man about my age named Kobe Asuru. You've heard the press about him, I'm sure. Believe me when I say he's twice as charismatic--and effective--as anyone describes in print.

And the way he uses his natural skills to their fullest puts me to shame._

Yes, I keep mine secret for a reason, I know.

Don't tell Pa, but in my travels, I've been forced to be...less than discreet a time or two. Trust me...

...all it does is reinforce the warnings you gave me since we first discovered I was unique._

Each time I think I've made a connection with someone...

レストラン

...once they find out what I can do, whether it's hours or days later, everything changes.

Invariably, they freak. They get retroactively paranoid, wondering what else Clark Kent is hiding from them.

So I keep my distance. I report on events rather than get directly involved, and frankly, I'm getting disturbingly good at it.

Ma, there's got to be a way for me to USE my abilities and yet not feel totally isolated by them._

?

UH-OH. FALLING TREE CATCH YOU, PAL? NO BONES BROKEN, SO YOU'LL BE--

AAAAH!

BAYUKA DU! DU!

HAFIR TAY BAYUKA!

:SIGH:

There's got to be._

And studying these alien images has given me a notion, but explaining it will have to wait.

Right now, I have a meeting with the leader of the forces causing so much trouble for Kobe Asuru's tribe.

Love to Pa. Over and out._

...MUST UNDERSTAND, MR. KENT. WE TURAABA FOUGHT ***LONG*** AND ENDURED ***MANY*** HARDSHIPS TO MAKE THIS AREA HABITABLE.

THE GHURI, BY CONTRAST, WERE ***SETTLERS*** ATTRACTED BY THE BENEFITS OF OUR ***LABOR. LATECOMERS.***

WE ALREADY ***EMPLOY*** THEM. ***KOBE ASURU*** STIRRING UP THEIR ***INGRATITUDE*** IS DEPLORABLE ***ENOUGH.*** NOW THEY WISH TO THROW US FROM OUR ***HOMES--***

"LATECOMERS"? THEY'VE BEEN HERE FOR ***GENERATIONS,*** REPRESENTATIVE KEBILE. AND NO ONE'S ADVOCATING A ***COUP***--MERELY ***FAIR REPRESENTATION*** IN YOUR--***THEIR***-- GOVERMENT.

GIVE AN ***INCH,*** MR. KENT...

THE GHURI DESIRE ***RECOGNITION?*** FOR ***WHAT?*** ***BOTTOM-FEEDING?*** WE'RE CONTENT TO LET THEM BE. WE ***INSIST*** UPON THE SAME ***COURTESY.*** ASURU'S IDEAS ARE ***DANGEROUS*** AND SUBSTANTIALLY THREATEN OUR WAY OF ***LIFE.***

NO. THE TURAABA--AND, I ASSURE YOU, PARLIAMENT--HAVE ***NO PATIENCE*** FOR ***RADICALS*** OF MR. ASURU'S ILK. WE WILL ***NOT*** BE ***BULLIED*** OR ***DICTATED*** TO.

PHONE, SIR.

GOOD ***DAY,*** MR. KENT.

DON'T DO IT.

DON'T *MARCH?* AND WHY *NOT?*

BECAUSE THE GREAT *WHITE* MAN HAS DECIDED TO TEACH THE IGNORANT VILLAGERS SOME *MANNERS?*

DO YOU NOW SPEAK FOR THE *TURAABA,* MR. KENT?

CLARK.

MISTER. KENT.

YOU ARROGANT--! HOW *DARE* YOU TRY TO TELL US HOW TO--

BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU *HURT.* ABENA, YOU'RE AS INVESTED IN THIS AS *KOBE* IS. HEAR ME *OUT.*

GO, BUT GO *SMALL.* THE TURAABA ARE *SPOILING* FOR A FIGHT, AND UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, A *PROTEST* MARCH THAT *MASSIVE* COULD *BACKFIRE.*

WHEN PEOPLE ARE CONFRONTED WITH UNEXPECTED STRENGTH, THEY TEND TO REACT WITH *FEAR,* NOT *REASON.* *BELIEVE ME* WHEN I SAY THIS.

THAT LEAVES IT SOLELY UP TO *ME* TO PRESENT A CASE. WHAT MAKES YOU THINK *ONE MAN* WILL BE *CONVINCING* ENOUGH?

BECAUSE I *KNOW* THE MAN.

BESIDES... I'VE CALLED IN SOME FAVORS...

"...AND I CAN GUARANTEE YOU AN *AUDIENCE* OF *HUNGRY REPORTERS* TO CARRY YOUR WORDS *FORTH.*"

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, YOU CHARACTERIZE ME IN THE PRESS AS A MAN EAGER FOR *CONFLICT.* BUT I AM HERE TO TELL YOU THAT CONFLICT *EXISTS* WITH OR *WITHOUT ME.*

IT *EXISTS*--IT *THRIVES*--EACH TIME THAT MEN *ANYWHERE* ARE ALLOWED TO BELIEVE THAT *SOME* OF THEM ARE SOMEHOW *SUPERIOR* TO *OTHERS.* AND THAT IS A CONFLICT THAT WE GHURI WILL NOT *ABIDE.*

IF WE ARE TO SURVIVE THIS HARSH WORLD--IF *ALL* OF US ARE TO SURVIVE--IT WILL BE BECAUSE WE HAVE MET ONE ANOTHER WITH *OPEN HANDS,* NOT THRASHING *FISTS.*

WE COME TODAY TO CLAIM OUR PLACE AS EQUALS *AMONG* YOU--

ABENA--?

CLARK! CLARK, THE *VILLAGE--!* THEY-- THEY'RE *BACK!*

"THEY"? ABENA, WHO ARE YOU--

"THE *TURAABANS!*

"CLARK, THEY'RE BURNING US TO THE *GROUND!*"

OH, MY *GOD*. WHAT DO I...?

WHAT?

CLARK, LET *GO* OF ME! I MUST TELL *KOBE!*

NO! THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT THE TURAABA *WANT*--TO SEND YOUR BROTHER RUNNING *HOME!* ABENA, LET ME HANDLE THIS!

HOW? NO! KOBE MUST *KNOW!* OUR HOMES-- *CHILDREN--*

I MUST TELL HIM!

SIGH

NO, ABENA. THERE'S A BETTER WAY.

PA...

...FORGIVE ME.

WH--? WHERE DID THE SISTER GO? I WAS SURE I *SAW* HER. SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO DRAW ASURU *AWAY...!*

VERY WELL. *REGRETTABLE,* BUT THIS FORCES US TO ACT MORE *DIRECTLY.*

...SILENCE HIM.

--SO WE MUST NO LONGER LOOK TO OUR *NEIGHBORS* TO *GIVE* US A VOICE. WE MUST BE HEARD ON OUR *OWN*--

MR. ASURU, COME WITH *US*. YOU ARE UNDER *ARREST*.

WHAT? ON WHAT *CHARGE?*

WAIT? WHAT'S HE *GUILTY* OF?

OF SPEAKING THE *TRUTH!* THIS IS *ABSURD!*

OFFICER, *RELEASE* ME! EVERYONE, PLEASE STAY *CALM!*

LEAVE.

NOW.

CLARK...?

--OUT OF THE WAY! YOU ARE *OBSTRUCTING JUSTICE!*

PEOPLE, *PLEASE!* THIS ACCOMPLISHES *NOTHING!* I SHALL GO WITH THEM IF IT WILL BRING *PEACE*--

TAKE YOUR HANDS *OFF* ME! STEVEN, GET THIS ON *FILM!*

NO! LET THE MAN *SPEAK! LET HIM SPEAK!*

--REPORTING *LIVE*, WHERE *MOB VIOLENCE* HAS *EXPLODED*--

ASURU...

...SHUT UP.

THERE. THAT'S THE *LAST* OF THEM. ABENA, I...

...ABENA...

...ABENA, SAY SOMETHING. I--

OH, GOD.

AAAAA

JESUS! SOMEBODY HELP

HELP HIM, HE'S

WHO DID TH

NOBODY SAW

NO! GET AWAY FROM ME!

WHAT ARE YOU?

ABENA, HOLD TIGHT.

KOBE NEEDS YOU.

:GASP:

KOBE! WHO--?

THE MAN WITH THE SCARRED FACE. HE'S HEADED FOR A GETAWAY CAR. HE THINKS HE CAN RUN FROM ME IN BROAD DAYLIGHT.

THINK AGAIN.

KOBE!

WHO?

REP. KEBILE, WHAT'S YOUR CONNECTIO

EXPLAIN WHAT JUST HAPPENED

SIR, A MAN LIES *DYING*

TRUE YOU'RE INVOLVED WITH

...NO... NO, NO, NO...

KOBE, IT'S *CLARK.* HANG *ON.*

WE'RE GOING TO THE *HOSPITAL.* KOBE... DON'T LET *GO.*

KOBE...

Ghana Dispatch

ABENA ASURU PROBATIONARY TO PARLIAMENT

Abena Asuru

by Clark Kent

Abena Asuru, sister of the late Ghuri spokesperson Kobe Asuru, was today appointed a probationary member of local Parliament subject to a redistricting process expected to favor the Ghuri. Despite repeated threats from terrorists presumed to be Turaaba activists, Ghuri citizens last week staged a massive write-in campaign at the national Parliamentary polls, sparking the region's most significant political reform in a decade.

"There are no words for what my brother taught so many, including myself, regarding the value of our own humanity," said Provisionary Representative Asuru. "Our voice has been heard. Thanks to Kobe's efforts, the Ghuri have begun to reclaim an invaluable sense of self-worth.

Continued on page 3.

Kobe Asuru

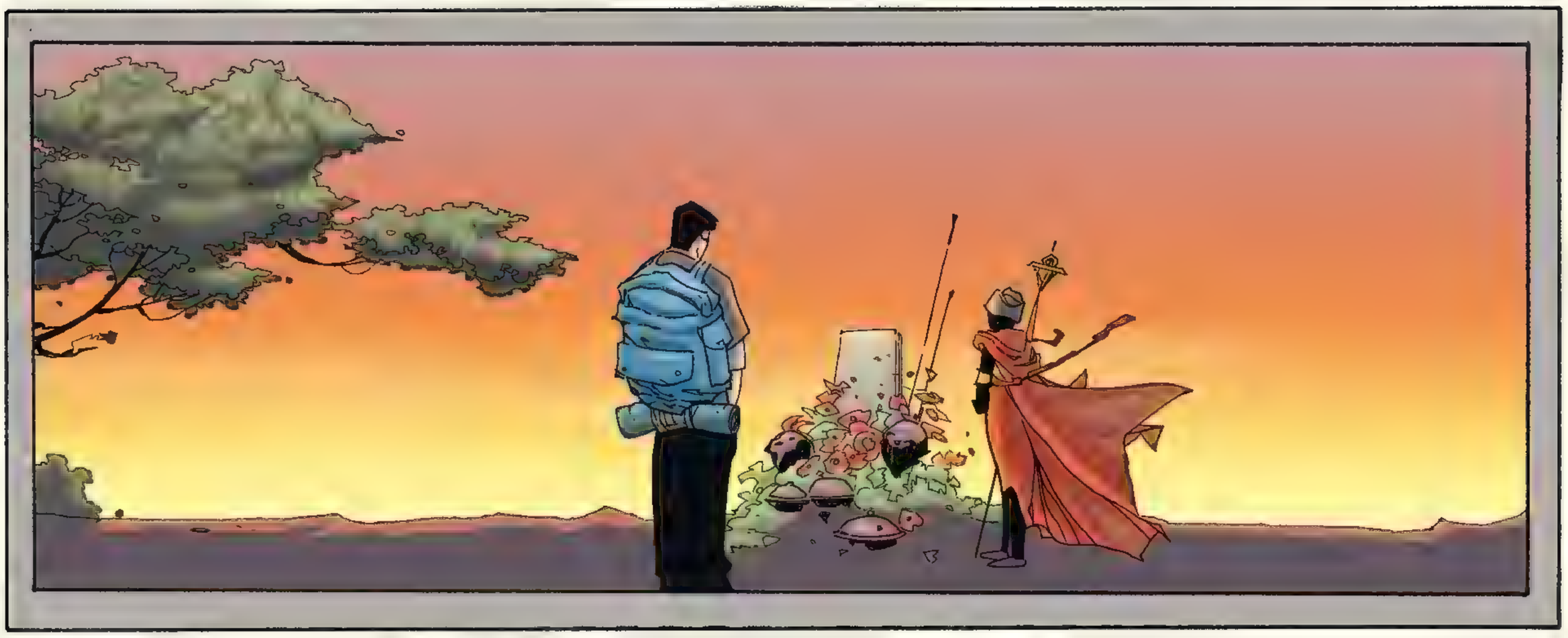
KEBILE LINKED TO ATTACKS, RESIGNS PARLIAMENT

by Kwane Quansah

Turaaba politician Saye Kebile was forced yesterday to relinquish his post as Member of Parliament amidst a series of allegations tying him to the murder of Kobe Asuru and to numerous attacks on the Ghuri tribespeople. Parliament has appointed special investigators to…

Continued on page 4.

Saye Kebile



YOU'RE NOT THE *FIRST*, ABENA.

YOU'RE *SCARED* OF ME NOW.

DON'T WORRY. I WON'T STAY.

I SUPPOSE WE...OWE YOU FOR THE GOOD YOU HAVE DONE.

NO TERRORIST CAN SPEAK OF YOU WITHOUT REVEALING HIS *OWN* DEEDS. IF THE GHURI MAINTAIN A *SIMILAR* SILENCE, WILL THAT CANCEL OUR DEBT?

NO DEBT. ABENA, I'M SO SORRY.

ABENA...?

WHY...WHY COULDN'T YOU HAVE *S-STOPPED* THIS...?

I HAD NO *CHOICE.* ABENA. I HAD TO SAVE THE PEOPLE *HE* WANTED SAVED. I MISS HIM, *TOO.*

KOBE ASURU WILL BE REMEMBERED AS A GREAT MAN WITH A SIMPLE LEGACY.

HE WAS WHO HE *WAS.*

KOBE A.SURU

a charge to keep

AND THE WORLD WILL BE A BETTER PLACE *FOR* IT.

THREE DAYS LATER.

KANSAS.

...NNNNGGHH...

...DOGGONE SEED GETS HEAVIER EVERY...

UNNNF!

...EVERY *YEAR*...

...Y'D THINK WE WERE PLANTIN' *ANVILS*...

HWUFF!

JONATHAN KENT, YOU'RE GETTIN' AWFUL LONG IN THE *TOOTH* FOR--

--THIS--

?

I ALSO HARVESTED THE *NORTH FORTY* BEFORE YOU DROVE UP.

CAN I HAVE A RAISE IN MY *ALLOWANCE?*

GOOD T'SEE YOU, SON. *DARN* GOOD. LET'S GO SURPRISE YOUR *MA.*

SHE'S IN HER LITTLE *HOBBY ROOM.*

ALIENS

UFOs.COM

WHAT'S UP IN THE SKY *THIS* TIME, MA?

A *BIRD* OR A *PLANE?*

CLARK!

YOU KNOW, GIVEN A *QUARTER CENTURY*, YOU COULD HAVE MADE ONE HECK OF A *QUILT* INSTEAD...

YOU *SHUSH*. YES, I *STARTED* THIS JUST HOPING TO FIND OUT SOME MORE ABOUT *YOU*, BUT IT GOT TO BE *FUN*.

NO ONE SAW YOU FLY *IN*, DID THEY, SON? YOUR MA TELLS ME SATELLITE TECHNOLOGY GETS MORE SOPHISTICATED EVERY *DAY*.

TOLD YOU BEFORE, PA, I CAN SEE THEIR TRANSMISSIONS. JUST HAVE TO WEAVE BETWEEN THEM, IS ALL.

YOU GUYS LOOK *GREAT*. HOW'S THE TOWN? WHAT'S THE BUZZ THESE DAYS?

CLARK, YOU DON'T HAVE TO HINT AROUND. THERE'S BEEN NO NEWS SINCE SHE UP AND LEFT.

NO ONE'S HEARD FROM LANA LANG FOR *YEARS*.

AND LEX...?

OH, HE'S TURNED UP. BAD PENNIES TEND TO *DO* THAT.

HE'S IN METROPOLIS. STARTED HIS OWN COMPANY, I HEAR. AND THAT'S ALL I WANT THE *LUTHOR* NAME DISCUSSED IN THIS HOUSE.

YOU BOYS WASH UP AND GET TO THE *TABLE.*

...AND THEN THERE WAS THE NIGHT YOU TWO *"DROPPED IN"* ON *AREA 51*...WERE *THEY* NOT PLEASED...AND THAT TIME YOU NEEDED *VACCINATIONS* FOR *SCHOOL*...

CLARK, TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO *TODAY* WE FOUND YOU IN THAT ROCKET, CRASHED IN A FIELD, AND IN ALL THE TIME SINCE...

...I'VE BEEN *TROUBLE*...?

...YOU'VE BEEN THE BEST THING THAT EVER *HAPPENED* TO US. KEEPING YOUR *SECRET*...*THAT* WAS TROUBLE.

CAN YOU *IMAGINE* WHAT THE WORLD WOULD HAVE MADE OF YOU IF THEY'D LEARNED WHAT YOU CAN *DO?*

I BELIEVE

WELL... WE'RE ABOUT TO FIND *OUT.*

WALK WITH ME TO THE BARN.

I BE EVE

CLARK, WE DON'T LIKE THE *SOUND* OF--

AH. HERE IT IS. STAND *BACK?* THANKS.

SKREEUNKK

THERE. HASN'T DETERIORATED ONE BIT, HAS IT?

CLARK, WHAT DO YOU *MEAN,* *"WE'RE ABOUT TO FIND--"*

ALWAYS SEEMED EVERY BIT AS TOUGH AS *I* AM. SOMETHING ABOUT HOW THE *SUN* FORTIFIES OUR ALIEN *CELLULAR STRUCTURE* IS MY GUESS, GIVEN HOW GOOD IT FEELS TO DRINK SUNLIGHT IN.

CLARK--

IT'S STILL HERE. THE BANNER. GOOD. IT'S BEEN ON MY *MIND.*

ITS COLORS, ITS INSIGNIA... CLEARLY, THIS MEANT A GREAT *DEAL* TO MY FOREFATHERS. WELL...

...IT'S TIME IT MEANT MORE TO *ME.*

I KNOW THAT LOOK.

HE'S MADE UP HIS MIND ABOUT...*SOMETHING*. CLARK, WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO *SAY?*

MA...PA... YOU'VE ALWAYS TAUGHT ME TO DO RIGHT BY PEOPLE. THAT'S THE GREATEST GIFT YOU EVER GAVE ME.

BUT I FEEL LIKE I'M WORKING WITH MY *HANDS* TIED. HIDING ALL THE TIME... KEEPING MYSELF SECRET... KEEPING MYSELF...

...ISOLATED...

SOMETHING HAPPENED IN AFRICA. SOMETHING PRETTY AWFUL. BUT FOR A MINUTE--JUST ONE MINUTE, AND FOR THE FIRST TIME--I GOT CALLED UPON TO GIVE MY *ALL*. TO HAVE *PURPOSE*.

ALIENS.COM

AND IT FELT *AMAZING*.

LIKE I WAS FINALLY *PART* OF SOMETHING RATHER THAN STANDING ALONE ON THE *SIDELINES*. LIKE I WAS *CONNECTED* TO THE WORLD. AND, MAN...

...I WANT TO FEEL THAT WAY *AGAIN*.

THAT MEANS NO LONGER RUNNING FROM WHO I REALLY *AM*.

YOU'RE CLARK KENT. YOU'RE OUR *SON*.

BUT I'M ALSO SOMEONE *ELSE*, PA. IT'S TIME I STARTED FINDING OUT WHO *HE* REALLY IS...

...AND I HAVE A GOOD IDEA WHERE TO *START*.

MA... YOU STILL *SEW...?*

...AND SOME LEATHER FOR THE *BOOTS.*

WILL THIS DO?

POSSIBLY. IF WE MOLD IT AROUND YOUR FEET, CAN YOU HEAT-WELD THE SEAMS?

IT WORKED WITH THE TUNIC. THANKS AGAIN, MA.

IT'S NOT LIKE I CAN JUST TAKE THIS PROJECT TO A *TAILOR.* NO...

...I THINK WE'RE WISE KEEPING ALL THIS TO *OURSELVES.*

YOU'RE REALLY *EXCITED* ABOUT THIS.

NOT HAVING TO LIE *LOW* ANYMORE? IT'S GOING TO FEEL LIKE CLIMBING OUT OF A *FULL BODY CAST.* NOW, HERE'S WHAT I WAS THINKING FOR THE COLORS...

CLARK AGE 3

2+ 4 months

AGE 2

CLARK, AGE FOUR...

"MAKE A WISH, CLARK... NOW, BLOW..."

SON? THERE'S A CRACK IN THE BARN'S CENTER BEAM, AND THE TRACTOR'S GOT A CLOGGED FUEL LINE. WHEN YOU GET A MINUTE, I COULD USE SOME HELP...

HMM? OH, SURE, PA. I'LL GET RIGHT ON IT.

THAT'S NOT QUITE THE LOOK WE'RE GOING FOR, MA. HERE...

got milk?

...LET ME FIRE UP THE *TABLET* SO YOU CAN *SEE.*

KLIK

LIKE *THAT.*

LIKE *THEM.*

got milk?

AMAZING. JUST *AMAZING.*

YOUR FATHER AND I ALWAYS *FIGURED* YOU WERE FROM...SOMEWHERE *EXTRAORDINARY...*

...BUT *THIS...*

"I KNOW, MA. IT'S LIKE THE TABLET'S A ***HISTORY TEXT*** AND AN ***ATLAS*** ROLLED INTO ***ONE.*** OBVIOUSLY, WE CAN'T READ THE ***TEXT,*** BUT I COULD LOOK AT THE ***PICTURES*** ALL DAY. COULDN'T ***YOU?***

"***LOOK*** AT THEM. EXPLORERS. SCIENTISTS. MEN AND WOMEN CONQUERING THE HARSHEST ***FRONTIERS*** AND PLANTING THEIR ***BANNER*** IN RESOLUTE ***DEFIANCE.***

"THIS IS THE RACE WHO ***SENT*** ME HERE, MA. ***WHY,*** WE HAVE NO ***CLUE...*** BUT CLEARLY THEY PUT ***THIS*** IN MY SPACECRAFT BECAUSE THEY WANTED ME TO KNOW MY ***HOME.***

"THEY WANTED ME TO CARRY ***ON*** FOR THEM ***HERE...*** LIKE IT'S MY ***CALLING.*** MY ***BIRTHRIGHT.***

"AND IF I ***FOLLOW*** IT, EVERYTHING ELSE FALLS INTO ***PLACE.***"

UH-OH.

WHAT? HEAR SOMETHING? A FIELD MOUSE STUB ITS TOE AGAIN?

NO. THE TRACTOR. WHILE WE WERE TOURING ANOTHER *PLANET*, PA GOT IT *RUNNING* AGAIN.

SORRY, PA. LOST TRACK OF *TIME*. BUT MA AND I ARE MAKING REAL *HEADWAY*. PRETTY SOON--

PRETTY SOON, YOU CAN GO *PLAY-ACTING* IN YOUR LITTLE *COSTUME*.

THAT'S GREAT.

JONATHAN KENT.

THAT'S NEVER A GOOD TONE...

AT LAST! HE *SPEAKS!* JONATHAN, WHAT'S GOT *INTO* YOU? EVER SINCE CLARK CAME HOME, YOU'VE BEEN ACTING LIKE HE'S A...A *BOTHER.*

DID HE DO SOMETHING TO *UPSET* YOU?

GOT NO AXE TO GRIND. DON'T SEE THE *PROBLEM.*

THE *PROBLEM* IS, CLARK'S GOING THROUGH A *HUGE* CHANGE, AND ALL THIS TALK ABOUT HIS *DESTINY* AND HIS *HERITAGE*...IT'S A LOT FOR HIM TO *DEAL* WITH.

YOU WERE ALWAYS GOOD AT KEEPING HIS *FEET* ON THE GROUND, JONATHAN. *TALK* TO HIM. MAYBE HE COMES FROM THE *STARS,* BUT HE NEEDS TO BE REMINDED HE'S JUST LIKE *YOU* AND *ME.*

WELL, THAT'S JUST *IT,* ISN'T IT?

HE'S *NOT.*

JONATHAN! YOU CAN'T REALLY *BELIEVE* THAT! AND TO *SAY* IT--!

WHAT IF HE *HEARD* YOU?

"I REMEMBER WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL, MR. POTTER--WHO TAUGHT ASTRONOMY--***SWORE*** THERE WAS 'LIFE OUT THERE.'

"AND I MADE FUN OF HIM SAME AS ***EVERYBODY.*** THAT WAS TOO BIG AN IDEA FOR ***SMALLVILLE.***

"THEN YOUR PA AND I FOUND THAT ***SHIP*** OF YOURS IN SUTTON'S FIELD... AND I'VE BEEN WISHING I COULD APOLOGIZE TO MR. POTTER EVER ***SINCE.***"

HARDEST SECRET I EVER HAD TO ***KEEP,*** CLARK.

"ARE WE ALONE IN THE UNIVERSE?" IS A QUESTION MAN HAS ASKED SINCE TIME ***BEGAN...*** AND YOU'RE THE ***ANSWER.***

WHAT ARE YOU ***DOING?***

SEVEN YE--

SEVEN YEARS. LONG TIME TO BE ***GONE,*** SON. AND EVERY YEAR, WE SAW YOU ***LESS.***

I WROTE. SENT E-MAIL. *PA* READ IT, RIGHT?

JUST POKING AROUND. FOUND OUT LAST YEAR THAT I COULD FOCUS MY VISION LIKE A ***MICROSCOPE,*** AND IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE EXAMINED THE ***ROCKET.***

MORE LIKE I READ IT TO HIM. HE TAKES TO COMPUTERS LIKE TURKEYS TAKE TO *THANKSGIVING*. YOU KNOW THAT.

WHAT?

NOTHING. YOU'D THINK SOMEONE WHO DIDN'T GET ALONG WITH HIS *OWN* FATHER WOULD BE A LITTLE *WARMER* TO HIS SON.

IN THE FIRST PLACE, MATTHEW KENT WAS A SPITEFUL, NEEDY MAN WHO WORKED HARD TO MAKE JONATHAN FEEL *STUPID* AND *INSECURE*.

AND IN THE SECOND PLACE, DON'T YOU *DARE* PRESUME THAT YOUR FATHER FEELS ANY *DIFFERENT* TOWARDS YOU NOW THAN HE *ALWAYS* HAS.

THAT'S WHAT I'M *AFRAID* OF.

PARDON?

I SAID, SO WHAT *IS* EATING PA? JUST THAT I'VE HURT HIS FEELINGS BEING *AWAY* SO LONG, OR IS THERE MORE *TO* IT?

I...I DON'T *KNOW*.

HEY, PA! WE WERE JUST *TALKING* ABOUT YOU. LISTEN, MA AND I ARE REALLY COMING *ALONG*. CAN I SHOW YOU THE--

'SOKAY. I DON'T WANT TO GET IN THE WAY OF ALL THE *HOOPLA*.

PA, *STOP*. IF YOU DON'T *APPROVE* OF--OF THIS *CHOICE* I'M MAKING, JUST *SAY*--

WHO AM I NOT TO *APPROVE?* IF YOU CAN USE YOUR GIFTS TO HELP FOLKS *OUT*, CLARK, THEN MORE POWER *TO* YOU.

Geof's Veal

BUT?

BUT I'VE GOT SOME *FENCE POSTS* TO SHORE UP OUT NEAR THE *CREEK*.

I CAN DO THAT FOR YOU IN A *JIF*--

NO. I'VE GOT IT UNDER CONTROL.

...

ALL RIGHT, THEN.

COME ON, CLARK.

Geof's Veal

Geof's Veal

OH, NO...

WHAT ON *EARTH* WAS *THAT* ABOUT?

CLARK, PUT ME DOWN.

NOT UNTIL YOU *TALK* TO ME. PA, I *KNOW* YOU AND THAT'S *NOT YOU.* WHY WERE YOU WALING ON THE *ROCKET?*

NO GOOD REASON. PRETTY DAMN FOOL THING TO *DO.* WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN.

PA, STOP LOOKING SO *NERVOUS.* I'M NOT GOING TO *DROP* YOU, YOU KNOW...

...THAT...

YOU'VE NEVER BEEN *UP* HERE BEFORE.

NOPE.

I'VE NEVER *TAKEN* YOU. I...IT NEVER OCCURRED TO ME THAT YOU'D WANT TO...

FLY? WHY *WOULDN'T* I?

GUESS YOU DON'T KNOW ME AS WELL AS WE *THOUGHT,* HUH? DON'T FEEL BAD, CLARK. THAT'S *MY* FAULT...

...AND NOW I'M *PAYING* FOR IT.

I FAILED, CLARK. I WANTED TO BE YOUR REAL FATHER.

YOU *ARE* MY--

NO. I *TRIED.* BUT A DAD'S JOB IS TO GIVE TO HIS SON. PASS ALONG WHAT HE KNOWS...AND ENOUGH OF WHO HE *IS* TO *MATTER.*

THAT'S THEIR *BOND.* AND IF OURS WAS THAT *STRONG,* SEVEN YEARS *APART* WOULDN'T WIPE IT *OUT.*

I--

I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING BECAUSE I WANTED TO BELIEVE IT HADN'T *BROKEN,* CLARK. BUT THEN YOU COME BACK ONLY TO TELL ME YOU DIDN'T EVEN WANT MY *NAME* ANYMORE.

THAT YOU'RE GONNA GO OFF AND CREATE A WHOLE *NEW* IDENTITY FOR YOURSELF.

I MISS MY *SON.*

IS THAT WHAT YOU MEANT WHEN YOU SAID I WASN'T *LIKE* YOU?

I DIDN'T MEAN FOR YOU TO HEAR--

DOESN'T MATTER. *"NOT LIKE YOU."*

NOT LIKE A MAN WHO LEFT HOME WHEN HE WAS EIGHTEEN TO FIND HIS PLACE IN THE WORLD.

WHO WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO GO FIGURE OUT WHO HE WAS RATHER THAN LET OTHERS DECIDE THAT *FOR* HIM.

WAS THAT HARD FOR YOU?

VERY.

THEN WHERE DO YOU THINK *I* GOT THE COURAGE TO DO THE *SAME THING?*

MATTHEW & JONATHAN age 2

"NOT LIKE YOU..."

ALL RIGHT, PA, *YES.* A *"NEW IDENTITY"*--*BUT.* I DON'T *WANT* TO *STOP* BEING CLARK KENT-- SO MORE LIKE A *"DUAL"* IDENTITY. SOMEHOW.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. YOU WANT THE SUIT TO HAVE A *MASK?*

CAN'T. THERE'S THE *PROBLEM.* IF I WANT PEOPLE TO *TRUST* ME, THEY'LL HAVE TO BE ABLE TO SEE MY *FACE.*

HMM.

THEN MAYBE THE *FLYING ALIEN* ISN'T THE HALF OF YOU THAT NEEDS A *DISGUISE...*

FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, SON, I DON'T NEED X-RAY VISION TO SEE YOUR ***SIX-PACK.***

NO T-SHIRTS. EVER. EVERY GIRL YOU ***PASS*** WILL NOTICE YOU.

REALLY?

DON'T GET ***EXCITED.*** THAT'S NOT WHAT WE'RE GOING FOR. HERE, TRY THIS ON.

BETTER. AND REMEMBER TO KEEP YOUR ***HAIR*** TAMED. NOW, LET'S HEAR YOUR ***VOICE.***

"FOUR SCORE AND SEVEN YEARS AGO--"

A LITTLE HIGHER. AND SOFTER. JONATHAN, WHERE'S THAT ***SUIT JACKET?***

IT'S A LITTLE TOO--

SOFTER.

IT'S A LITTLE TOO BIG IN THE SHOULDERS.

WHICH IS WHAT YOU ***WANT.*** STOP STANDING UP SO STRAIGHT. HANG YOUR HEAD A LITTLE.

AND YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO THIS EVERY ***DAY?***

I'LL ***HAVE*** TO IF THIS IS GOING TO WORK. SO WHAT DO YOU THINK?

NNNNOT... NO.

NOT ***QUITE.*** YOU NEED SOMETHING... ***MORE.***

WHAT, YOU MEAN LIKE A *WIG* OR SOMETHING?

LIKE *THAT* WOULDN'T ATTRACT ATTENTION. THE GOAL, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, IS *NOT* TO STAND OUT...

...AND THE PROBLEM IS YOUR EYES.

THAT *BLUE*, CLARK, IS UNLIKE *ANYTHING ELSE* ON *EARTH*, AND THAT'S NOT JUST YOUR *MOTHER* TALKING. YOU'VE BEEN GETTING COMPLIMENTS ON YOUR EYES FOR AS LONG AS I CAN *REMEMBER*.

ALL THE SLOUCHING IN THE *WORLD* WON'T HIDE *THEM*. HERE'S A THOUGHT...

MARTHA WHAT ARE YOU--?

OH. OH, I GET IT. RECKON THAT'LL HELP?

LET'S SEE...

WHOA! STRONG *PRESCRIPTION!*

YOU CAN LOOK THROUGH *WALLS*. *WORK* WITH ME HERE.

THE WAY THE LIGHT REFRACTS THROUGH THE LENS, IT DOESN'T *CHANGE* THE COLOR--BUT IT DOES *CUT* IT.

GLASSES. *THAT'LL* FOOL 'EM.

HUSH. THEY TAKE ATTENTION AWAY FROM YOUR EYES *AND* CHANGE THE SHAPE OF YOUR *FACE.* THE REST IS IN HOW YOU *CARRY* YOURSELF AROUND FOLKS. NEVER GIVE THEM ANYTHING TO *LOOK* AT.

ONCE, IN KANSAS CITY, YOUR PA AND I SAW THIS PLAY ABOUT TWINS. TURNED OUT IN THE END, BOTH PARTS WERE PLAYED BY THE SAME ACTOR--

--AND CLARK, I'LL BET NOT ONE PERSON IN THE AUDIENCE REALIZED. FIND SOME BOOKS, STUDY THAT CRAFT.

THAT SAID, ARE YOU *SURE* SURROUNDING YOURSELF WITH *REPORTERS* IS THE SMARTEST CAREER MOVE?

I'M A *JOURNALIST,* PA. AND I'M *GOOD* AT IT. BESIDES, WORKING IN A *NEWSROOM* MEANS I'M FIRST TO HEAR WHEN I'M... YOU KNOW...*NEEDED.*

THEN AGAIN...

WHAT?

THEN AGAIN, WORKING IN A NEWSROOM MEANS I'M AROUND PEOPLE WHOSE JOB IS TO EXPOSE THE TRUTH.

mints

IF PEOPLE SEE THROUGH ME... IF I BLOW IT...YOU AND PA SPEND THE REST OF YOUR LIVES EXPLAINING ME TO THE GOVERNMENT. I CAN'T PUT YOU AT RISK LIKE THAT.

SON, YOU'VE DONE FOR US AND WORRIED FOR US ALL YOUR LIFE. IT'S TIME YOU DID WHAT *YOU* HAVE TO DO.

AND WHATEVER COMES OUT OF THAT, WE'LL HANDLE IT. IT IS A GAMBLE...BUT WE TRUST YOU. YOU'VE *NEVER* LET US DOWN.

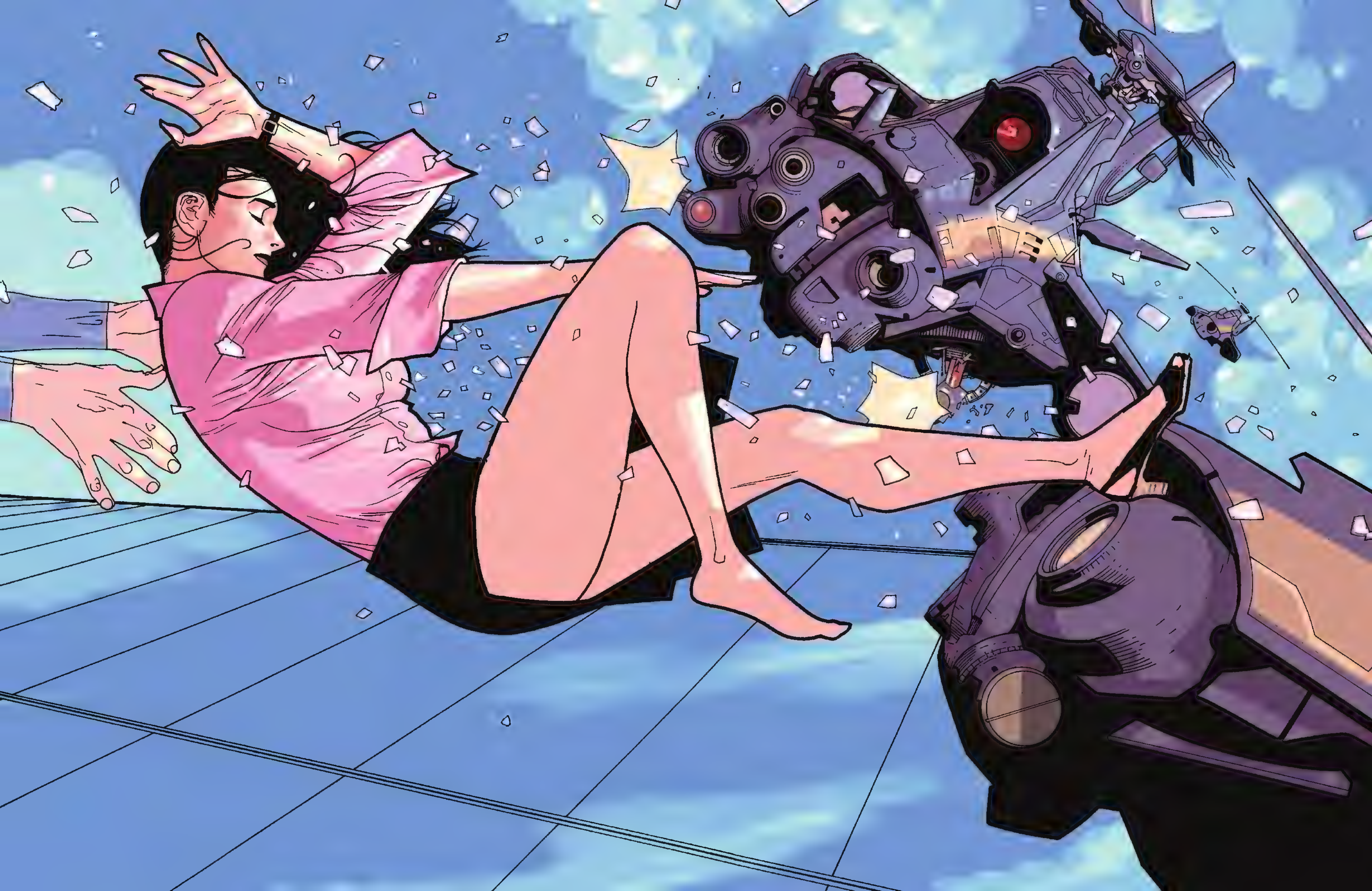
WE'LL JUST CROSS OUR FINGERS AND CLEAR THE MANTLE FOR YOUR *OSCAR.*

BESIDES, YOU WANT TO KEEP A BIG SECRET, YOU KEEP IT IN A BIG *CITY.* THERE'S NEW YORK, GOTHAM, LOS ANGELES... HAVE YOU DECIDED WHERE YOU WANT TO END *UP?*

WHERE?

WHERE ELSE *IS* THERE?

METROPOLIS



"EXCUSE ME, CAB DRIVER?"
"CABBIE?"
DAILY PR

SIR?

A THOUSAND PARDONS, BUT THE GENTLEMAN'S VOICE CANNOT BE ***HEARD*** OVER THE DIN OF ***TRAFFIC*** IN THESE STREETS.

COME AGAIN?

OH. RIGHT. I WAS WONDERING ABOUT THE ***ARMY COPTERS*** IN THE SKY. WHAT'S GOING ON?

OUR DOLLARS OF ***TAXATION*** AT WORK.

Tide

METROPOLIS TAXI

THE MAYOR HAS PERMITTED OUR MILITARY TO TEST SOME SORT OF ***"AUTOMATIC ANTI-TERRORIST"*** AIRCRAFT THIS FINE AFTERNOON.

RATHER ***UNSETTLING,*** I MUST SAY -- BUT THEN, GIVEN THE MANNER IN WHICH WE VOLLEY BETWEEN ***YELLOW*** AND ***ORANGE ALERTS,*** I SUPPOSE WE DO WHAT WE ***MUST*** TO FEEL ***SAFER,*** YES?

ONE LONGS FOR THE ***PAST,*** WHEN THE PEOPLE OF THIS CITY SEEMED ***FEARLESS.***

ALAS, THEIR ***PRESENT*** IS POISONED WITH ***ANXIETY.***

7th

GAS MAS

$399 ONLY

SALE

ACME

NOWADAYS, IT IS AS IF EVERYONE IS SIMPLY *WAITING* FOR TROUBLE TO OCCUR AS A *NATURAL COURSE.* IF IT TAKES SOMETHING IN THE *SKY* TO GIVE THEM *HOPE,* SO *BE* IT.

THE GENTLEMAN WAS NOT *AWARE* OF THIS DEVELOPMENT? DO YOU NOT LISTEN TO THE *NEWS?*

I'VE BEEN A LITTLE... ABSORBED. I'LL MAKE UP FOR IT.

JUST DROP ME OFF AT THE CORNER. I'M IN A BIT OF A RUSH.

GOT A *JOB INTERVIEW* IN FIVE MINUTES.

DAILY PLANET

DING

THIS MUST BE THE *PLACE*...

DAILY PLANET

I'M ON *DEADLINE* HERE...!

FACT CHECKERS TO THE METRO DESKS!

PERRY WANTS A HOME PAGE REFRESH *NOW!*

SYSTEMS SAYS *FIVE MINUTES!*

RON, POLICE COMMISSIONER ON LINE TWO.

NEED MORE SERVERS FOR THE *INTERNATIONAL* PAGE.

WHITE HOUSE CORROBORATES THE STORY? THEN *UPLOAD!* LET'S *GO!*

--BECAUSE I OWN YOU, YOU INTERN TWIT!

NOW, YOU WILL WEAR THIS WASTEBASKET ON ***YOUR HEAD*** SO YOU CAN HEAR THE GENTLE, REINFORCING ECHO AS YOU SAY ONE HUNDRED TIMES, "MR. GALLOWAY ASKED ME FOR **STRAWBERRY**, NOT BERRY-**BANANA**." **READY**, JACK?

UMM... IT'S "JIM," ACTUALLY.

YOUR NAME IS WHATEVER I PUT ON YOUR TOO-GENEROUS PAYCHECK, YOU LOUT!

THAT'S NOT PERRY ***WHITE...?***

OH, GOD, NO. THAT'S ***QUENTIN GALLOWAY,*** THE ***PUBLISHER.***

DOES HE TREAT EVERYONE IN THE NEWSROOM LIKE THIS?

TODAY'S ONE OF HIS ***GOOD*** DAYS. MAN, THIS IS HARD TO ***WATCH,*** BUT... Y'KNOW..

...WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO...?

HEY!

HIS NAME IS *JIMMY OLSEN.*

JIM.

QUIET.

JIMMY. NOT "LOUT," NOT "TWIT." YOU THINK YOU'RE A *BIG SHOT? PUBLICLY HUMILIATING* AN *EMPLOYEE* BECAUSE *YOU'RE* IN A BAD MOOD ABOUT *FROGURT* IS *SMALL* AND IT IS *PETTY.*

LOIS *LANE.* DIDN'T YOU USED TO *BE* SOMEBODY? WHY AREN'T YOU ON THE TRAIL OF SOME *U.F.O.* OR *CROP CIRCLE* OR SOME OTHER *OOGITY-BOOGITY?* SLOW *NEWS* DAY?

BACK OFF. YOU PAY FOR OUR *WORK,* NOT OUR *DIGNITY. I DO NOT* LIKE *BULLIES,* AND YOU *WILL NOT* PUSH GOOD PEOPLE *AROUND* JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE *BIGGER.* NOT WHILE I'M HERE.

WHAT?

I THINK I'M IN *LOVE.*

AND WHEN EXACTLY *ARE* YOU HERE, MS. LANE? TRAVEL VOUCHERS FOR KUALA LUMPUR... TORONTO... GULFPORT, *MISSISSIPPI...*

SIX MONTHS AGO, YOU HAD A *REPUTATION.* YOU HAD *RESPECT.* NOT *MINE,* OF COURSE, BUT APPARENTLY THAT OF YOUR *PEERS.*

BUT THAT WAS BEFORE YOU LOCKED ONTO SOME FAIRY TALE AND BEGAN FOLLOWING SO-CALLED *"LEADS"* ALL OVER THE WORLD. A GRAVITY-DEFYING *STRONG-MAN* IN *KHAKIS* AND A *LEATHER JACKET* WHO DOES *"GOOD DEEDS,"* LA DE DAH.

DO YOU *REALIZE* YOUR CO-WORKERS CALL THIS *"LOIS LANE'S LOONY LARK"?*

"SAYS LANE, 'YOU'LL BELIEVE A MAN CAN FLY!"

HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE SAW THAT "*LARK*" CATCH A FALLING ***SPACE SHUTTLE*** A FEW WEEKS BACK.

YES. ALMOST AS MANY AS BELIEVE THAT ***ANDY KAUFMAN*** IS STILL ALIVE. MEANWHILE, HUNDREDS ***MORE*** HAVE ***DIFFERENT*** EXPLANATIONS FOR IT LANDING SAFELY, AND ***NASA*** DENIES ***EVERYTHING.***

MY INVESTIGATION ISN'T ***DONE, AND*** YOU'RE CHANGING THE ***SUBJECT.*** YOU WANT TO HAVE ***TEMPER TANTRUMS,*** BE MY ***GUEST.*** BUT IF YOU WANT AN EFFICIENT ***NEWS ORGANIZATION*** FULL OF ***ADULTS,*** STOP ***POISONING*** IT WITH ***CHILDISHNESS.***

YOU'RE A ***LEADER.***

I EXPECT ***BETTER*** FROM YOU.

YOU ARE ***SO*** MY HERO.

AGAIN? YOU HAVE ***GOT*** TO START SETTING YOUR SIGHTS HIGHER. YOU'RE NOT GOING TO START FOLLOWING ME AROUND AGAIN, ARE YOU? WHAT DID THE RESTRAINING ORDER SAY?

FIFTY FEET.

FIFTY FEET. BE GOOD, AND I'LL MAKE IT ***THIRTY.***

WOW.

PARDON?

JUST... WELL-HANDLED. YOU'LL...STILL BE HERE *TOMORROW*, RIGHT?

OH, SURE. BY NOW, GALLOWAY HAS CALLED PERRY AND THEY'RE DECIDING WHAT PERRY CAN TRADE *THIS* TIME TO KEEP ME ON STAFF.

MR. KENT? EDITOR WHITE WILL SEE YOU NOW.

KE--? WAIT. *CLARK* KENT? *YOU* FILED THAT PIECE ON *ASURU*?

YOU READ IT?

TURN UP THE VOLUME. WHAT?

I SAID, YOU *READ* IT?

YEAH.

DOESN'T SOUND LIKE YOU WERE IMPRESSED.

NO. I MEAN, *YES*. BUT FROM YOUR *WRITING*...THE WAY YOU COME ACROSS IN *PRINT*... I JUST ASSUMED YOU'D BE...I DON'T KNOW...

...TALLER...?

MISTER KENT, HE'S *WAITING*.

RIGHT BEHIND YOU. SORRY.

WOW.

AW, GEEZ! WHAT HAPPENED TO MY STAPLER...?

YOU CAN'T BE FOR *REAL.*

IN...WHAT *WAY,* MISTER WHITE?

C'MON, KENT! YOU'VE BEEN SITTING THERE *MUTTERING* AND *SQUIRMING* AND STARING AT YOUR *SHOES* FOR TEN MINUTES!

NO ONE'S SHOES ARE THAT INTERESTING!

HOW THE HELL DID SOMEONE AS SHY AS *YOU* GET AN INTERVIEW WITH *QERIZAN TERRORISTS?* OR CHIEF JUSTICE *BENTON?*

WHY AREN'T YOU A *BANK TELLER?* WHY DO YOU WANT TO WORK *HERE?*

I... WELL...

SPIT IT *OUT,* KENT!

BECAUSE, MR. WHITE, YOU HAVE THE FASTEST, MOST RELIABLE NEWS SERVICE IN THE *WORLD.*

WHENEVER A STORY HAPPENS, THE PLANET GETS IT *FIRST* AND HAS IT WEBBED *AND* IN PRINT WHILE THE NEW YORK TIMES IS STILL FISHING FOR *SOURCES.* YOUR STAFF IS *THAT GOOD.* AND *I'M* THAT GOOD.

!

I WISH I COULD CONVEY HOW *CRITICAL* THIS IS TO ME, MR. WHITE. I *NEED* TO BE WHERE THE SPEED OF INFORMATION IS *PRIORITY ONE.* MY WORK DEPENDS ON SPOTTING TROUBLE *AS IT BREAKS.*

HUH. THE MOUSE *CAN* ROAR.

ANYTHING *ELSE* YOU WANT TO TELL ME?

WHOOPS.

OH, GOSH! I'M SORRY, MISTER WHITE! I GET CLUMSY WHEN I'M NERVOUS AND ALL...

SIGH

IT'S ALL RIGHT, KENT. I'LL CLEAN UP LATER.

BUT I CAN--

LEAVE. THE. PENS.

KENT, HERE'S THE TRAGEDY. MY REPORTERS ARE THE BEST BECAUSE THEY ARE *NEVER* AFRAID TO WRITE THE *TRUTH--*

--AND, SON, YOU HAVE GOT FEAR WRITTEN *ALL OVER YOU.*

I CAN'T USE YOU.

YOU DON'T KNOW ME.

PROVE IT! IF YOU'VE GOT WHAT IT *TAKES*, KENT, *SHOW* ME. SHOW ME *RIGHT NOW* OR *STOP WASTING MY TIME!*

I-- I--

MISTER WHITE!

KENT, *YELLING* JUST MAKES ME THINK YOU'RE--

--CRAZY--

GET DOWN!

OH, MY GOD! WHAT'S HAPPENING--?

THE COPTERS? SOMEONE'S MANEUVERING THE COPTERS TO ATTACK?

MIKE, DIDN'T YOU FILE A STORY SAYING THIS WAS IMPOSSIBLE? THAT THEY'RE NOT EVEN ARMED?

THAT'S WHAT I WAS TOLD, I SWEAR!

THAT'S IT, PEOPLE...KEEP STARING OUT THE WINDOWS... NOTHING TO SEE HERE...

"I GET CLUMSY WHEN I'M NERVOUS..."

NICE ACTING, DeNIRO. WELL, HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO REDEEM YOURSELF. GOD...

...PLEASE DON'T LET ME LOOK RIDICULOUS...

LOIS! CALL THE PENTAGON! FIND SOMEBODY WHO CAN EXPLAIN--

LOIS?

"WHERE'S LANE?"

UP THERE? ARE YOU INSANE?

GALLOWAY WAS RIGHT, KID. I NEED A BIG STORY. BESIDES, YOU WANTED TO BE A REPORTER...!

AND RELAX. MILITARY FAMILY! I'VE BEEN FLYING BIRDS LIKE THIS SINCE I WAS NINE!

DAAAAH!

WHOOPS. THROTTLE'S THIS ONE. SORRY.

SO WRONG...SO WRONG...

NO, NO, NO. "FRONT PAGE...FRONT PAGE..."

BUCKLE UP AND GET THAT CAMERA READY!

OVER THERE! THAT *RESTAURANT!*

I SEE IT! NOBODY'S *HURT* YET, BUT IT'S JUST A MATTER OF *TIME!*

BITE YOUR *TONGUE--!*

MS. LANE, LOOK *OUT!*

JIMMYYYY!

AAAAAAH!

NO! OH, GOD -- NOT LIKE THIS--

--OH, GOD--

--OH, G--

?

DAILY PLANET
PRESS
OLSEN, JAMES

HOLY...

...WHATEVER...!

IT'S YOU. IT'S REALLY YOU!

DON'T BE AFRAID.

I'M NOT!

SKY! COPTERS! ARTILLERY! DANGER! GO GO GO!

DAILY PLANET

THEN WE TALK.

DAILY PLANET
LOIS LANE
Reporter
800-555-NEWS
LLane@dailyplanet.net

SHE'S NOT *AFRAID.*

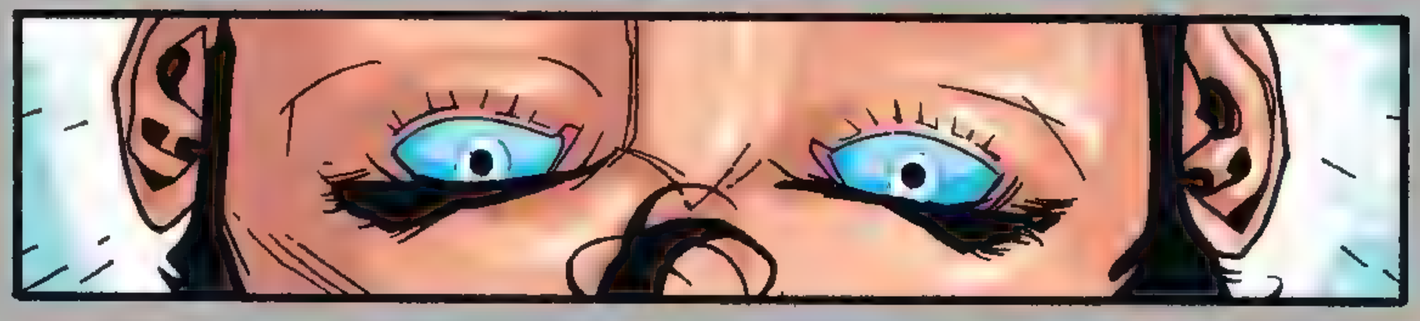
TONYA!

MY-- MY *LEG--!* LEBRON, *RUN!*

NO! TONYA, *GET UP! PLEASE,* BABY...

...YOU...

...YOU GOTTA BE *KIDDIN'* ME...



TWO AT A TIME, HUH?
BRING IT.

LEX...?

WHAT DO YOU *MEAN* THEY'VE GONE *ROGUE*, PRIVATE?

THERE'S NOBODY IN THEM!

I *UNDERSTAND* THAT, GENERAL PICKFORD, SIR! SOMEONE'S OVERRIDDEN OUR *REMOTE CONTROL* OF THE *COPTERS!*

THIS IS NO LONGER AN *ANTI-TERRORISM TEST* OVER *METROPOLIS!* THIS IS NOW A FULL-BLOWN ATTACK *ON* THE CITY!

THEN ABORT THE *MISSION! NOW!*

OFF-LINE

VAPORIZE/SELF-DESTRUCT'S BEEN OVERRIDDEN AS *WELL*, SIR! AND WE CAN'T *SHOOT* THEM DOWN IN AN *URBAN ENVIRONMENT!*

THEN HOW DID *TWO* OF THEM JUST FALL INTO THE *EAST RIVER?* OUR INSTRUMENTS SAY THEY WERE TAKEN DOWN BY A *MISSILE!*

NOT A *MISSILE*, SIR. ACCORDING TO OUR *FIELD WITNESSES*, IT WAS A...A...

...A *FLYING MAN.*

IN A RED CAPE.

IN A RED CAPE.

I KNOW. I KNOW.

"AND JUST WHERE *IS* PETER PAN *NOW*, SON?"

"UMM...

"...APPARENTLY, WHOEVER TOOK COMMAND OF THE COPTERS ALSO *ARMED* THEM, GENERAL. THEY HIT THIS--THIS--"

"FLYING MAN."

"--*FLYING MAN* WITH AGM-65s, SIR. WHO... *WHAT*EVER HE WAS...

"...NOTHING WE KNOW COULD HAVE *SURVIVED*."

WELL...

...*THAT* WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN.

1842

GRACIE JIU-JITSU

WHO--

--THAT GUY?

--SI--

WMET, 98.7 IN METROPOLI

TOWER, THIS IS METROAIR 48

ROGER, UNIT 12

ALL FLIGHTS, THIS IS METROPOLIS TOWE

MET NEWS DISPATCH, HEAD FOR MIDTOWN

PLAYING THE HITS OF TODA

CEIVED WORD OF POSSIBLE

IF YOU'RE NOT BUSY

ALL UNITS RESPOND! ALL UNITS RESPOND!

PREPARE TO RE-ROUTE EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

WE HAVE A SITUATIO

AND TOMORROW, WITH LESS--WAIT, THIS JUST I

ERRORIST ATTACKS ON MIDTOWN

SKYSCRAPER EVACUATIONS HAVE BEGUN

HUSTLE, EVERYBODY! LET'S GO! GO!

UNNNF!

QUIT SHOVING!

SHUT UP AND MOVE! HURRY!

HEARD THEY SHOT OUT THE METROTOWER

WHOLE PLACE COULD COLLAPSE

OH, GOD, DON'T LET US DIE

C'MON, PEOPLE... WE CAN'T SNEAK UP UNTIL THE STAIRWELLS ARE CLEARED...

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THIS.

HAVE I FAILED YOU YET? YOU WANT TO KEEP A FLYING MAN IN SIGHT, YOU CLIMB THE CITY'S TALLEST BUILDING. YOU GOT A BETTER IDEA?

NOPE.

--KNOW AS MUCH AS **YOU** DO, MR. LUTHOR! WELL, I MEAN, THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE, BUT...

WHO **IS** HE? NO VISIBLE MEANS OF NEGATING **GRAVITY**, IMPERVIOUS TO BULLETS AND **EXPLOSIONS** AND GOD KNOWS **WHAT** ELSE--

JURIS? JURIS, ARE YOU THERE?

SIR, WE HAVE A VISUAL! THE LAST CHOPPER'S JUST GONE DOWN IN THE **PARK!**

WHOOM

...

I'LL CALL YOU BACK.

KLIK

I'D PREFER YOU MAKE AN ***APPONTM***

SHUT UP.

TWO DEAD, SEVENTEEN INJURED.

IS THIS WHAT YOU'VE ***COME*** TO?

WHAT *I'VE--?*

I *BEG* YOUR PARDON. DO I *KNOW* YOU?

I'VE NEVER MET ANYONE LIKE YOU.

YOU CAN DROP THE *"INNOCENT BUSINESSMAN"* ACT. YOU MAY HAVE FOOLED THIS CITY, BUT YOU'RE NOT FOOLING *ME.* YOU'RE *RESPONSIBLE* FOR THIS.

INNOCENT PEOPLE SUFFERED BECAUSE THE REMOTE UNITS IN THOSE HELICOPTERS WERE SABOTAGED WITH ULTRASONIC SIGNALS.

I TRACED THEM TO YOUR TOWERS AND TO THIS OFFICE.

YOU *TRACED* THESE ALLEGED SIGNALS. HOW?

I SAW THEM.

OH. WELL, *THAT'LL* HOLD UP IN COURT.

YOU KNOW WHAT *COURT* IS, YES? WHERE I *BANKRUPT* YOU FOR FALSE ACCUSATIONS AND PROPERTY DAMAGE? WHERE I FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN *FLY* BY SUING THE TECHNOLOGY RIGHT OFF YOUR *BACK?*

WHO DESIGNED YOUR *FORCE-FIELD?* YOUR *ANTIGRAVITY?* S.T.A.R. LABS? *KORD TECHNOLOGY?*

YOU *WILL ANSWER* ME!

ARE YOU *THREATENING* ME?

I'M TRYING TO FIGURE YOU *OUT*, BUT CALL IT WHAT YOU--

SIR, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? WE HEARD AN *EXPLOSION*, AND--

YOU! *FREEZE!*

NO.

YAAAAH!

HEAT...CAME OUT OF YOUR *EYES*...

YOU MELTED STATE-OF-THE-ART *ORDNANCE*.

ADD IT TO MY *BILL*, YOU DISEASED *MANIAC*. I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU INTERFERED WITH THIS *DEFENSE TEST*, BUT I *WILL* FIND OUT.

MAY I *QUOTE* YOU?

HEY! WHERE'D *YOU* COME FROM? GET *OUT* OF HERE!

KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK

NO.

LEX LUTHOR? LOIS LANE, DAILY PLANET! WHAT'S YOUR CONNECTION EITHER TO THIS ATTACK ON METROPOLIS OR THIS MAN, WHO *SAVED* IT IN FULL VIEW OF THOUSANDS OF *BYSTANDERS*?

MS. LANE, YOU MAY ASSURE YOUR READERS THAT EVERYONE AT LEXCORP KNOWS THIS DISASTER FOR THE SENSELESS *TRAGEDY* IT IS.

MY HEART GOES OUT TO ITS VICTIMS...

...AND MY *HAND*, TO THEIR *PROTECTOR*. THIS STRANGER'S AMAZING ACTIONS NO DOUBT PREVENTED THE LOSS OF *COUNTLESS* LIVES, MEANING THAT *WHOEVER* HE MAY BE...

...HE IS A *FRIEND* TO *LEX LUTHOR*.

KLIK

BRING ME THAT CAMERA.

HEY!

FREEDOM OF THE *PRESS!* *FREEDOM OF THE PRESS!*

JIMMY, DON'T LET GO!

QUIET, LADY. 'KAY, WHO WANTS FIRST SHOT AT THIS SNOT?

TAKE *THAT...!*

THIS OFFICE IS *PRIVATE PROPERTY!* GET *OUT* OF HERE -- ALL OF YOU! *NOW!*

FIRST TIME HE'S *LISTENED* TO YOU, LUTHOR?

!

HE DIDN'T LOOK PARTICULARLY *HAPPY* ABOUT HIS *VISIT.*

GOOD.

DAY.

SECURITY!

MY CAMERA!

--AND STAY OUT!

-:SIGH:-

I LET YOU DOWN.

IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT, KID. C'MON, LET'S GET BACK TO THE NEWSROOM. THERE'S STILL PLENTY OF STORY HERE.

BUT NO PICTURES. NO PROOF.

GOD, NOBODY'S ***EVER*** CAUGHT LUTHOR ACTING LIKE ***THAT*** BEFORE. YOU REALLY COULDA ***NAILED--***

I'M SORRY, MS. LANE.

THANK YOU.

WHO *IS* THAT GUY?

www.dailyplanet.met/index.html

DAILY PLANET

DAILY PLANET

SUPERMAN!

Flying Strongman KOs Killer Copters

by Lois Lane

Thousands of city residents witnessed the unbelievable today when an anonymous stranger arrowed through the skies, saving bystanders from certain death.

Army, City Officials Mystified

Incredible Feats of Strength

PAGES

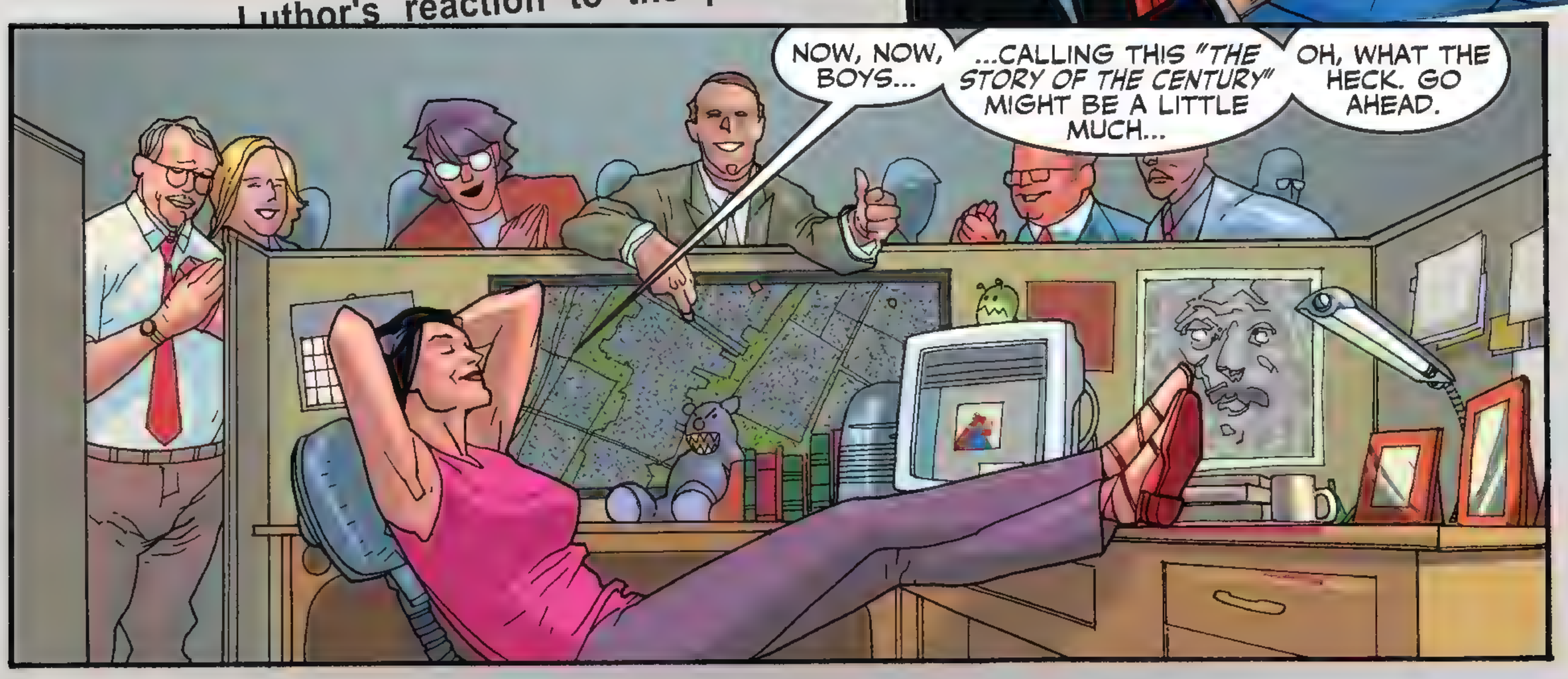
International
National
Washington
Business
Sports
Science
Health
Comics
Metro
Classifieds
Weather
Obituaries

CURRENT WEATHER 72°

City Leader Lex Luthor Belittled, Embarrassed By "S"-Emblazoned Vigilante

photo by Jimmy Olsen

Metropolis's savior, a hero to many, has already made at least one enemy, judging by astrobiologist Lex Luthor's reaction to the presence



AHEM.

CHIEF!

SPEAKING. NOT TO INTERRUPT THE *PULITZER AWARDS* GOING ON IN YOUR DARLING *IMAGINATION,* BUT I WANT YOU TO MEET YOUR NEW *PARTNER.* SAY SOMETHING, KENT.

HI.

QUITE THE CHATTERBOX, ISN'T HE?

PUH--PAR--

--PARTN--?

JUST FOR A WHILE, WHILE HE LEARNS THE *ROPES.* I WASN'T GOING TO *HIRE* HIM--

--BUT HE FILED ONE HELL OF AN *EXPOSÉ* ON THE *CHOPPER* SABOTAGE.

SEEMS THE ENGINEER AT *WAYNETECH* WHO HEADED THE *DEFENSE CONTRACT* AND *BUILT* THE TEST CHOPPERS--ONE *"PAUL PAXTON"*--USED TO GO BY HIS *REAL* NAME OF *OTTO JURIS*--

--BACK WHEN HE WORKED FOR *LEXCORP.*

LEXCORP WAS BIDDING *AGAINST* WAYNETECH FOR THIS CONTRACT. WITH THE COPTERS' SPECTACULAR FAILURE, LUTHOR'S COMPANY WAS A *SHOO-IN. WAS.*

BECAUSE WHILE KENT COULDN'T PROVE A *DEFINITE* CONNECTION, THE GOVERNMENT NEVERTHELESS TOOK LEXCORP OUT OF THE *RUNNING.*

THAT'S THE FIRST DIRT ANYONE'S TURNED UP ON *LUTHOR* THAT I CAN *REMEMBER.* I'D SAY THAT EARNS KENT HIS SHOT.

♫

OFF A PRETTY THIN *LEAD*. HOW'D YOU STUMBLE *ACROSS* IT?

OVERHEARD SOMEBODY. FOLLOWED A HUNCH.

WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?

YOU. DON'T KNOW WHY THIS DIDN'T STRIKE ME EARLIER, BUT YOU SEEM...*FAMILIAR.* GIVE ME A MOMENT...

I'M SURE IT'S NOTHI--

UT! UT! HANG ON...

...

AH, FORGET IT.

WHEW.

"DEAR MA: IT *WORKED.*"

To: Martha.Kent@kent.com//ENCRYPTED

though Luthor was another matter altogether.

That's right, Ma. I found Lex today...completely by accident. What a huge disappointment. In the back of my mind, I guess I'd always hoped that we could be friends again someday, but the way he's changed...and what he's changed INTO...

Don't worry--I kept to the shadows, and he didn't seem to recognize his old pal Clark. True, he hasn't seen me since I was a teenager, but I'd still hoped to get a little more practice at hiding my secret before dangling it in front of the world's smartest man.

I can't help worrying that he could put two and two together at any moment.

Still, this whole dual identity thing...Ma, we had our doubts, but it might just work.

Already, there's a woman here--and, WOW, by the way--who's hung a name on me for when I'm in the suit. Don't laugh when you see it.

BREAKING NEWS
SUBWAY HIJACKERS DEMAND RANSOM

Who knows? Maybe it'll come to MEAN something.

Gotta go.

Love,
Clark

COLORADO.

ECHO PARK A DIVISION OF LEXCORP.

MR. LUTHOR, SIR! WHAT A...PLEASANT *SURPRISE!*

IF YOU'D PHONED AHEAD, WE WOULD HAVE SENT FOR *LUNCH--*

SKIP THE PLEASANTRIES, DR. CHUN. I SPENT THE RIDE *IN* REVIEWING LAST MONTH'S DATA.

YOU FOLLOWED UP ON THE NARROWBAND SPIKE OF OCTOBER 14TH?

A SUPERNOVA IN SKYSECTOR J172, NOTHING MORE.

AND THE MULTIPLE SIGNAL ON THE 29TH?

ATMOSPHERIC INTERFERENCE, THAT'S ALL.

MISTER LUTHOR, PLEASE BE *ASSURED* THAT EVERY SCIENTIST IN THIS OBSERVATORY SHARES YOUR PASSION FOR THE SEARCH FOR EXTRATERRESTRIAL INTELLIGENCE.

THE RESEARCH BREAKTHROUGHS YOU MADE WHEN YOU WERE JUST A ***BOY*** ARE ***STILL*** THE FOUNDATION OF OUR EFFORTS, AND WE ARE ***GRATEFUL*** FOR YOUR FUNDING.

BUT SCANNING THE SKIES FOR ERRANT ***MESSAGES*** IS ABOUT ***FAITH*** AS MUCH AS IT IS ABOUT ***MATH,*** SIR. IT'S A ***VERY*** LONG-TERM INVESTMENT.

IF YOU'VE COME TO SHUT US ***DOWN*** JUST BECAUSE WE'RE NOT *"PRODUCING"*--

PUT YOUR WORRIES TO REST, DOCTOR. I ***WANT*** YOU TO KEEP MONITORING THE STARS. I ***HAVE*** FAITH...

...AND YOU ***NEVER KNOW*** WHEN CONCRETE AFFIRMATION OF ALIEN LIFE MIGHT ACTUALLY ***PRESENT*** ITSELF.

STILL, TELL YOUR TEAM TO SWITCH TO THE ***EMERGENCY GENERATORS.*** THERE'S ABOUT TO BE A BRIEF ***POWER OUTAGE...***

I'LL TAKE THE ELEVATOR DOWN.

MAIN POWER SOURCE

MARCY? CLEAR MY APPOINTMENTS FOR TOMORROW.

TELL MR. KENT I WOULD LIKE TO SEE HIM.

LEÍNÍL
-GERRY A.-

--REPORTING LIVE FROM ***ST. MARTIN'S JUNIOR HIGH*** JUST OUTSIDE METROPOLIS--

--WHERE, MOMENTS AGO, TWO ***STUDENTS*** CARRYING A GYM BAG ***FULL OF FIREARMS*** WOUNDED A ***SECURITY GUARD*** AND STORMED INSIDE ON A REPORTED ***SHOOTING SPREE.***

NEWS

*TERRIFIED CELL PHONE MESSAGES FROM **INSIDE** REPORT NO **FATALITIES** AS OF YET, BUT HOSTAGE NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BEEN **COMPLICATED** BY THE ARRIVAL OF THE MYSTERIOUS FIGURE KNOWN SO FAR ONLY AS **"SUPERMAN"**--*

*--WHO, SECONDS AGO, IGNORING POLICE BARRICADES, FLEW **INTO** THE SCHOOL AND--*

*--OH, MY **GOD!** TOM, GET **DOWN!***

*LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, SCHOOL WINDOWS ARE **EXPLODING** IN A HAIL OF--*

--GUNFIRE--?

TOM! TOM, GET A *SHOT* OF THIS!

I REMIND VIEWERS WE'RE *LIVE ON THE SCENE,* WHERE SUPERMAN HAS BROUGHT THE TEENAGE SHOOTERS *INTO CUSTODY* IN A MATTER OF *MOMENTS!*

SUPERMAN! CAN WE HAVE A *WORD* WITH... YOU?

SUPERMAN?

SURVIVAL GUNS & AMMO

AMERICANS ONLY!

GUN SALE!

OPEN

NO WORD. AS HE HAS SINCE HIS ARRIVAL IN METROPOLIS LAST WEEK, THIS "SUPERMAN" HAS LEFT A SCENE OF RIGHTED CHAOS AS QUICKLY AS HE ARRIVED, WRAPPED IN SILENCE AND A RED CLOAK.

THIS IS BONNIE NATHAN REPORTING FROM--

NO T
Immi

WHITE POWER

STORMFRONT

DAVID A DUKE

THE BOYS SAID THEY BOUGHT THOSE WEAPONS FROM YOU.

WH--? WHERE'D YOU--? I--I DON'T SELL TO KIDS! THAT'S A BLACK MARKET! I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING AB--

I CAN HEAR YOUR HEARTBEAT. YOU'RE LYING.

ONE MINUTE AGO, I SAW A LITTLE GIRL SCREAMING BECAUSE SHE WAS STARING DOWN THE BARREL OF A GUN. SHE WAS NINE, AND SHE WILL REMEMBER IT FOR THE REST OF HER LIFE.

TAURUS

#00

NOW YOU WILL, *TOO.*

FREEZE, DIRTBAG! RAISE YOUR HANDS!

I... DON'T THINK HE CAN, SIR...!

WHAT THE--?

FASTER THAN A SPEEDING BULLET

by Clark Kent

A gunshop owner accused of selling firearms to underage and unlicensed customers claims to have been apprehended by the city's new "Superman."

www.dailyplanet.met/index.html

DAILY PLANET

GOVERNMENT, LOCAL AUTHORITIES DISAVOW KNOWLEDGE OF "SUPERMAN"

by Peter Hu

Despite being credited with the rescue of dozens of lives in the five days since his debut, state law enforcement officials have warned citizens to be careful of trusting Superman too readily. "We have no idea who, or what, he is or what his motives may be," cautioned Governor Becker. "Even Guardian Angels must answer to some higher force."

Wanted for Questioning
Cripples Hob's Bay Drug Ring
Look, Ma, No Wires

SUPERMAN: Hero or Vigilante? Where do you stand? Vote!

- Yes, He's proven himself
- No, I don't trust him

ANYBODY KNOW WHERE LOIS IS?

SAME PLACE SHE IS EVERY MORNING AT 8:45.

RRREEEEEERWWRWW

WHITE

WHITE

--AND *TROUPE'S* STORY-- YOU LET HIM GET BY WITH SECONDHAND SOURCES *AGAIN.* C'MON, CHIEF.

YOU'RE A BETTER EDITOR THAN *THAT.*

WHITE

AND ARE YOU REALLY SURE McVON BELONGS ON THE CRIME BEAT? CHIEF, ISN'T HE MORE OF A *FEATURES* GUY?

I ALWAYS THOUGHT HE WAS A FEATURES GUY.

HEY, YOU KNOW WHO'D BE BETTER FOR *NATIONAL? SOLOWAY.*

RRREEEEEERWWRWW

KLAK

FRAGIL

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU DON'T USE HIM MORE.

HMMM. WHO PICKED THIS PHOTOGRAPH?

RRREEEEEERWWRW

CHIEF...

...THAT'S *REALLY* ANNOYING.

RRREEEEEERWWRWW

SEE, I WOULDN'T HAVE GONE WITH THAT ANGLE. Y'KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

FIRE

KEEP HER(?)

① Best Writer
② Good Interviewer — ① No Boundaries
③ 3 Pulitzer Nominations — ② Despite Inability to listen
④ Won't take an answer — ③ to 17 lawsuits
⑤ No Good place to hide her Body — ④ Won't take "no" for an answer.

CHIEF? RECEPTIONIST SAYS YOU HAVE A CALL ON LINE THR--

DON'T CALL ME CHIEF!

HEAD... ROARING...

JIMMY, YOU DIDN'T TAKE THIS PHOTO, DID YOU?

...CAN'T... *HEAR* YOU...

WAIT. EARS... *CLEARING*...

KENT!

AAAGGH

!

UH-OH.

I JUST GOT WORD FROM *LEX LUTHOR'S* OFFICE. HIS PEOPLE CLAIM LUTHOR *HIMSELF ASKED* TO MEET WITH YOU--

--AN INVITATION HARDER TO COME BY THAN *PAINTBALL* IN THE *OVAL OFFICE*--

--AND YOU *POSTPONED?*

I--

TWICE?

THE *DOCK STRIKE* STORY--

--CAN *WAIT!* LUTHOR IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FIGURES IN THIS *CITY*, ONE OF THE MOST INNOVATIVE *INVENTORS* IN THE *WORLD*, HE *REQUESTED* TO BE INTERVIEWED--AND YOU DIDN'T *JUMP* AT IT?

KENT, WHAT PLANET ARE YOU *FROM?*

"LOIS, TAKE KENT OVER TO LEXCORP AND SHOW HIM HOW THIS IS *DONE.*

"NOW."

YOU'RE SLOWING ME UP.

SORRY.

LEXCORP©

YOU *CAN* TELL PERRY I KNOW THE ROPES BY NOW. I REALIZE YOU'RE SICK OF *"BABYSITTING"* ME.

TRUE. BUT THE VALUE-ADD IS THAT I GET TO SPAR WITH *LEX,* WHICH GIVES ME AN OUTLET FOR MY *RAGE,* SO I'LL *DEAL.*

"DISAVOW KNOWLEDGE." GHAAAH...!

PARDON?

TODAY'S LEAD. *THAT'S* WHAT'S CHAPPING MY BUTT. PERRY COULD HAVE FOUND A MILLION WAYS TO SPIN THAT SUPERMAN STORY SO THAT WE WEREN'T ENDORSING *FEAR.*

I'M SURE MR. WHITE DIDN'T INTEND--

I'VE BEEN FOLLOWING THIS STORY LONGER THAN *ANYONE,* RIGHT? IF THERE'S AN *AUTHORITY* ON SUPERMAN. IT'S ME. NOT *PERRY.* NOT *ANYONE ELSE* AT THE PLANET.

DO YOU HAVE AN APPOINTMENT?

PRESS PASS... PRESS PASS... I KNOW YOU'RE IN HERE...

AND WHETHER SUPERMAN'S *CALLED* YET, AND THAT'S *NOT THE POINT,* BECAUSE IT'S *NOT* LIKE I'M SITTING *BY THE PHONE* WAITING FOR HIS *CALL,* EVEN THOUGH HE *HAS* HAD MY NUMBER FOR 168 HOURS AND FIFTEEN MINUTES, AND I AM NOT COUNTING--

LANE AND KENT TO SEE THE BIG MAN. THANKS.

-- BUT I WOULD STAKE MY REPUTATION ON MY OBJECTIVE OPINION: HE IS HERE TO HELP. AND WE CAN TRUST HIM.

AND HE'S *HOT.*

AND HE'S *HO--*

--I MEAN-- THAT'S NOT--

--OH, JUST BUZZ US IN, ALREADY.

...AND TELL THE SENATOR TO STOP CLAIMING THAT I'M *"TRYING TO COPYRIGHT"* A VACCINE FOR AIDS.

JUST TRADEMARK.

JUST *TRADEMARK.*

YEAH, YOU GOTTA KEEP THAT ***LUTHOR*** NAME ***ALIVE*** SOMEHOW. I THINK THERE'S A WOMAN IN ***PENOBSCOT, MAINE*** WHO HASN'T HEARD IT.

AND YET, I WORK HARD TO MAKE HER LIFE BETTER ***NONETHELESS.***

MISS LANE. RECEPTION SAID THE PLANET HAD SENT TWO ***BULLDOGS.*** THAT MUST MAKE YOU ***MR. KENT.***

HELLO, LEX. IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE SMALLVILLE.

?

MR. KENT, I'M NOT ***FAMILIAR*** WITH *"SMALLVILLE."* IF YOU'RE CLAIMING THAT YOU AND I HAVE ***MET*** BEFORE--

--THAT MAKES THE ***SECOND*** TIME YOU'VE LIED ABOUT ME THIS ***WEEK.***

WHEN DID I L--?

I ASKED YOU HERE FOR TWO REASONS.

FIRST, TO LET YOU KNOW HOW ***DISPLEASED*** I WAS WITH YOUR STORY REGARDING THE HELICOPTER ATTACK ON METROPOLIS. YOU ACCUSED ME OF BEING SOMEHOW ***RESPONSIBLE.***

NO. I SIMPLY POINTED OUT THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ***LEXCORP*** AND--

I ***READ*** THE ***PIECE,*** KENT. YOUR INSINUATION WAS ***QUITE*** CLEAR AND NOT AT ***ALL*** AMUSING.

I APPRECIATE YOUR ***ANGER,*** BUT--

NOT ANGER. ***DISAPPOINTMENT*** THAT WHITE COULD HIRE SUCH AN ***AMATEUR.*** MY BEING UNAWARE OF EVERY TINY ACTION OF LEXCORP'S ***VAST STAFF*** IS, IF NOT DESIRABLE, EMINENTLY ***UNDERSTANDABLE.***

YOUR CONCENTRATION ON ***TRIVIAL MINUTIAE,*** HOWEVER--IN THE FACE OF A ***MUCH LARGER TRUTH*** THAT THREATENS THE ***ENTIRE WORLD--IS UNFORGIVABLE.***

TRANSLATION?

YOU'RE MISSING THE ***BIG*** STORY.

=SIGH= ALLOW ME TO SPELL IT OUT FOR YOU. DR. AARON, HAS THIS MORNING'S DATA BEEN INPUT?

YES, MR. LUTHOR.

ANALYZING DATA PROCESSING...

SPLENDID.

KLIK

LET ME SHOW YOU WHERE I DO MY *THINKING.*

NO, NO. NO NEED TO LEAVE. IT'LL COME TO *US.*

HERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT LEXCORP THAT'S OFTEN TAKEN FOR GRANTED:

THE VAST MAJORITY OF OUR PATENTS AND DISCOVERIES--FROM NEW AIRCRAFT DESIGNS RIGHT DOWN TO BASIC HOME IMPROVEMENTS--HAVE THEIR FOUNDATION IN THE STUDY OF *ASTROBIOLOGY.*

THE STUDY OF EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE. GEE, LUTHOR, WHAT DO YOU KNOW THAT WE *DON'T?*

SAID THE THIMBLE TO THE *BUCKET.*

EVER SINCE I WAS A BOY, I'VE BEEN UTTERLY FASCINATED BY THE POSSIBILITY OF ALIEN LIFEFORMS.

LIKE MAYR AND SAGAN BEFORE ME, I'M CONVINCED WE'RE NOT *ALONE* IN THE UNIVERSE.

TAKE *NEPTUNE,* FOR EXAMPLE.

THIRTY TIMES MORE DISTANT FROM THE SUN THAN IS EARTH. SURFACE TEMPERATURES, AT THEIR HIGHEST, 300° BELOW FAHRENHEIT. WHAT LITTLE SUNLIGHT REACHES HAS TO PENETRATE THICK CLOUD BANDS.

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO CONCEIVE THAT SENTIENT ORGANISMS COULD EXIST UNDER SUCH FRIGID, DARK CONDITIONS.

YET OUR PROBES HAVE GATHERED SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE TO ENVISION THE *ICEWORMS* THAT COULD THRIVE THERE.

HYPOTHETICALLY, THEY'D FEED ON THE GEOTHERMAL ENERGY CREATED BY DIGESTING THE PLANET'S HYDROGEN AND SULFUR COMPOUNDS. WITH THAT IN MIND, I DESIGNED A DEEP-SEA EXPLORER UNIT THAT COULD DO THE SAME.

I EXPECT THE PATENT TO COME THROUGH NEXT WEEK.

KLIK

MERCURY, OF COURSE, PRESENTS ITS OWN UNIQUE PROBLEMS. HOTTER THAN HOT. SOLIDS LIKE PHOSPHORUS *BOIL* UNDER THE SUN'S RAYS. THE ONLY WAY FOR LIFE TO SURVIVE HERE, DATA SUGGESTS...

...IS TO MAKE ITS HOME THE *SKY*... GLIDING CONSTANTLY THROUGH THE SPARSE ATMOSPHERE ON MOLECULES-THIN, PHOTON-RELECTING WINGS.

TAKING OUR CUE, WE'RE FABRICATING SPACECRAFT THAT CAN USE SIMILAR, SOLAR-FUELED MEANS TO SAIL THE STARS.

KLIK

LAST OCTOBER, OUR INSTRUMENTS GATHERED INFORMATION REGARDING A PLANET IN THE PROXIMA CENTAURI SYSTEM WHERE SILICON, NOT CARBON, WOULD BE THE BASIS OF--

NOT THAT THIS ISN'T FASCINATING, LUTHOR...ME, I JUST TAKE A *HOT BATH* WHEN I NEED TO MEDITATE...

...BUT HOW IS ALL THIS *HOLO-THEATER* RIGAMAROLE A FRONT-PAGE SPLASH?

KLIK

IT ISN'T.

THIS, HOWEVER... IS.

I'VE BEEN CATALOGUING THE NATURAL *ABILITIES* SUPERMAN HAS THUS FAR DEMONSTRATED.

HIS SENSES ARE INHUMAN. EYEWITNESSES CLAIM HE HAS UNCANNY HEARING, AS WELL AS EYES THAT CAN SEE X-RAYS AND OTHER ENERGY WAVELENGTHS-- AND EVEN *EMIT* THEM IN THE CASE OF *INFRA-RED.*

HE CAN CONTROL HIS PERSONAL GRAVITATIONAL FIELD.

HIS MUSCLES-- PRESUMABLY BY PROCESSING SOLAR RADIATION, THE ONLY CONCEIVABLY SUFFICIENT ENERGY SOURCE-- CAN SHATTER DIAMOND--

--AND ARE SHEATHED IN AN EPIDERMIS STRONGER THAN *TITANIUM* YET COMMON IN APPEARANCE.

WHERE DO YOU SUPPOSE SUCH A BEING *COMES* FROM? METROPOLIS? JAPAN?

PENOBSCOT, MAINE?

TRY HERE.

A MEGA-GRAVITY PLANET DWARFING ***JUPITER,*** ORBITING A STAR EMITTING ONLY THE ***DIMMEST*** OF RED LIGHT.

BY MY BEST CALCULATIONS, THESE-- AND ***ONLY*** THESE--ARE THE ENVIRONMENT FACTORS WHICH WOULD FORCE A HUMANOID TO ***EVOLVE*** OCULAR NERVES AND CELLULAR TISSUE TO SUPERMAN'S EXACT SPECIFICATIONS.

THIS IS YOUR STORY, MISS LANE. YOUR SO-CALLED ***"SUPERMAN"*** ISN'T A ***MAN*** AT ***ALL.*** HE'S AN ***EXTRATERRESTRIAL...*** A ***STRANGE VISITOR*** FROM ***ANOTHER PLANET...AND...***

...I HAVE ***PROOF.***

THAT'S A STRONG ACCUSATION, LUTHOR.

I'M A CLEVER MAN, LOIS. AND, I MUST ADMIT, SO IS *HE*.

WHY DO YOU THINK HE OPERATES SO OPENLY? WHY DO YOU IMAGINE HE WEARS A COSTUME SO BRIGHT YOU CAN SEE IT COMING FOR MILES?

TO CULTIVATE OUR *TRUST*. THE QUESTION IS...

...TO WHAT END? WHAT IS HE REALLY *HIDING?*

YOU SAID YOU HAD PROOF, LEX.

IRREFUTABLE EVIDENCE, *MR.* KENT. AND IN TIME--

WHAT IS IT? *HOW DO YOU KNOW ALL THIS?*

--IN *TIME*, I'LL *SHARE*. FOR NOW, LET'S BE CONTENT SIMPLY TO BASK IN MY *GENIUS*.

I *KNEW* THERE HAD TO BE BEINGS OUT THERE MORE ADVANCED THAN THE ONES THAT LITTER THIS MUDBALL.

KLIK

WHO KNOWS WHAT WE CAN *LEARN* FROM THEM?

LET'S GO.

RIGHT BEHIND YOU.

OH, THE HIP BONE'S CONNECTED TO THE... BACKBONE...

...THE BACKBONE'S CONNECTED TO THE... ANTIGRAVITY NEURAL NETWORK...

OPEN

DO YOU THINK LUTHOR'S RIGH--

I DON'T KNOW!

WOULD IT MATTER?

I DON'T KNOW.

LONG TIME AGO. HE DOESN'T SEEM TO REMEMBER, WHICH IS ITS OWN MYSTERY. THOUGH, TO BE HONEST, I WAS KIND OF *HOPING* HE WOULDN'T.

WHEN WE FIRST WALKED IN, YOU ACTED LIKE YOU AND LEX WERE OLD *FRIENDS*.

SHAME. THOUGHT MAYBE YOU COULD SHED SOME LIGHT ON *HIS* MOTIVES.

WHY THE BIG OBSESSION WITH FINDING EXTRATERRESTRIALS?

"LOOKING BACK, LOIS..."

SOLAR

KENT

5

DON'T DISTURB

Keep Out!

...I THINK HE JUST WANTS SOMEONE TO TALK TO.

PERRY WHITE
EDITOR IN CHIEF

WRITE IT UP.

ON WHAT BASIS, MR. WHITE? UNTIL HE PRESENTS HIS ALLEGED *"EVIDENCE,"* IT'S ALL CONJECTURE ON LUTHOR'S PART.

RIGHT. AND THE KEY WORD IN THAT SENTENCE ISN'T *"CONJECTURE."* IT'S *"LUTHOR."*

WHAT IS HIS *"PROOF"?* WHAT IS HIS *CREDIBILITY?*

OTHER THAN *YEARS* OF PROVING HIMSELF TO BE THE *LEADING EXPERT* IN THIS ENTIRE *FIELD?* ARE YOU *KIDDING* ME?

THIS ISN'T A *CRACKPOT THEORY,* KENT. THE VERY FACT THAT LUTHOR'S *MAKING* THESE CLAIMS ABOUT SUPERMAN *IS* NEWS.

*"EITHER *YOU* WRITE IT UP OR I'LL HIRE SOMEONE WHO *WILL.*

*"THIS IS THE CAREER YOU *WANTED,* KENT.

*"SUPERMAN ISN'T *YOUR PROBLEM."*

"NOT ONE OF US"

ASTROBIOLOGIST LUTHOR CLAIMS SUPERMAN IS A BEING FROM SPACE

by Clark Kent

"AND AS TO HOW THIS AFFECTS WHAT PEOPLE *THINK* OF HIM, WELL--"

BMX ACTION!

GUNS

Newsti

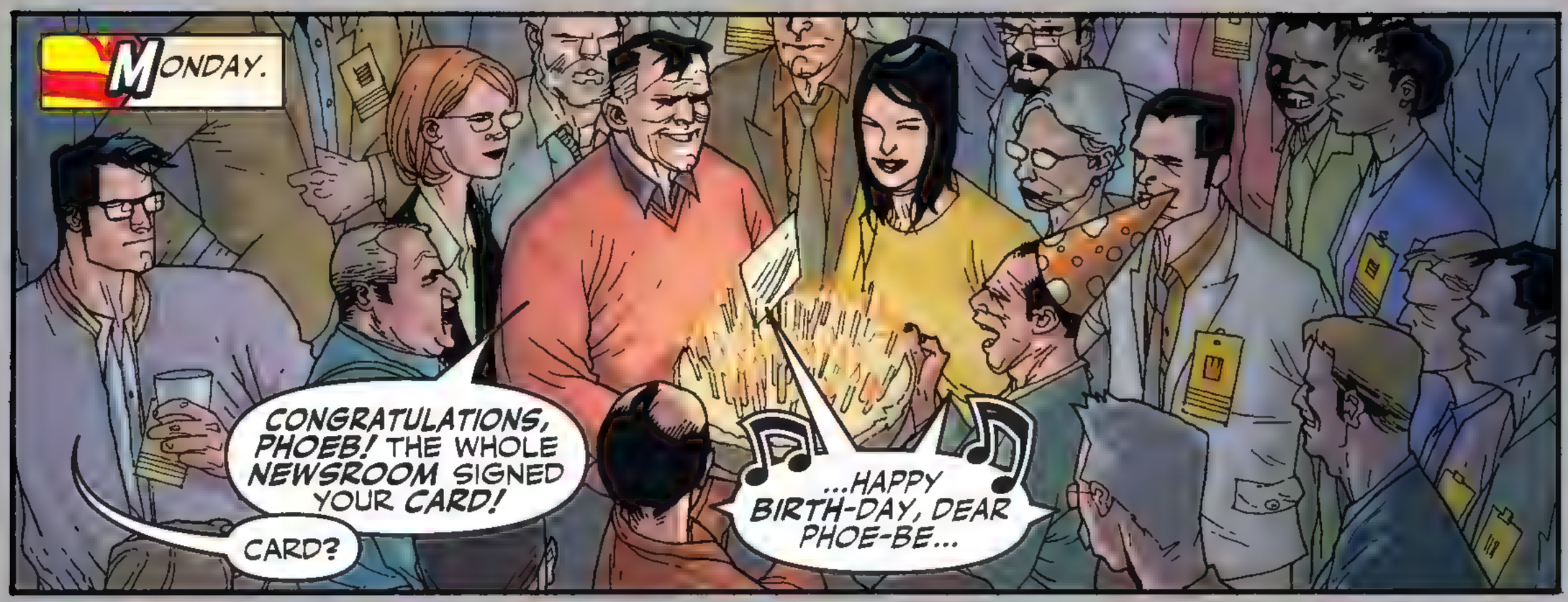
BRAZILIAN JIUJI

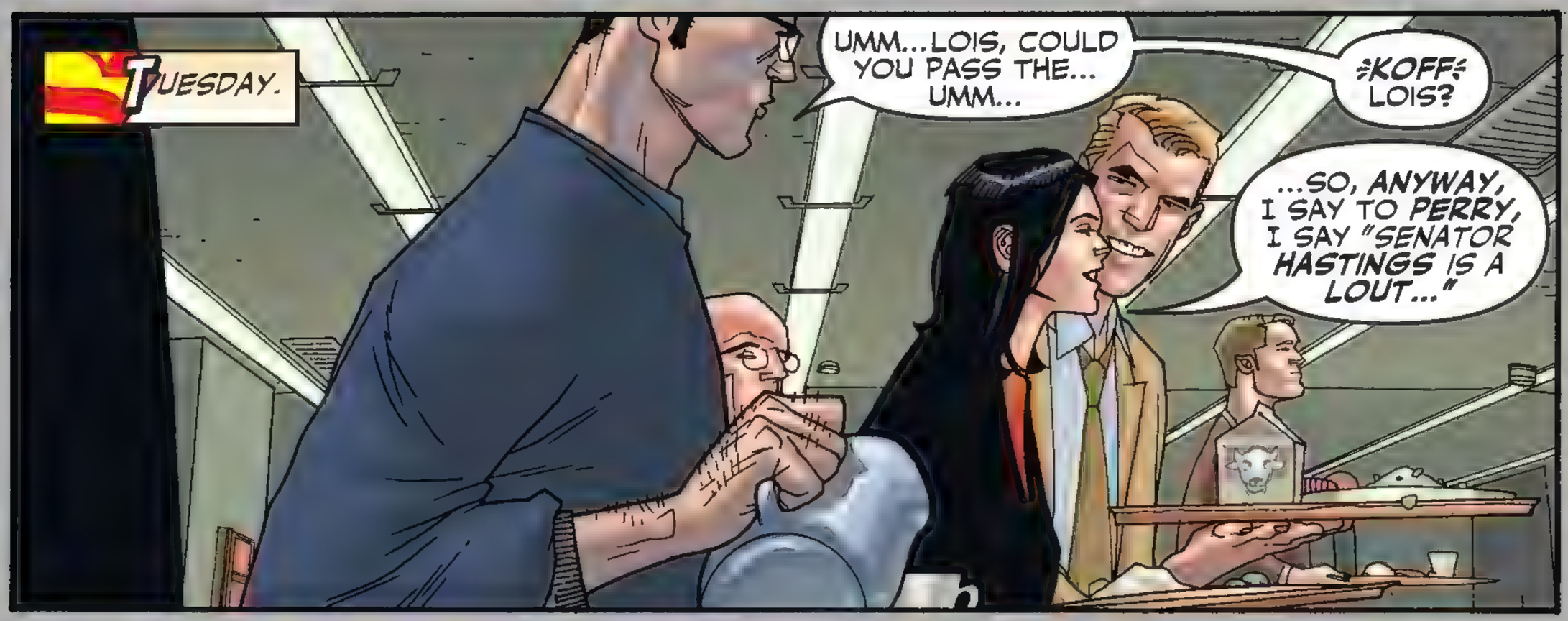
THE ENGINEER'S HAD A STROKE! IS THERE A *DOCTOR* HERE?

FOR GOD'S SAKE, *PLEASE!* WON'T SOMEBODY STEP *FORWARD?*

"--WE'LL JUST HAVE TO *SEE.*"

¿QUÉ?
VEINIL
·G. ALANGUILAN·


MONDAY.
CONGRATULATIONS, PHOEB! THE WHOLE NEWSROOM SIGNED YOUR CARD!
CARD?
...HAPPY BIRTH-DAY, DEAR PHOE-BE...


TUESDAY.
UMM...LOIS, COULD YOU PASS THE... UMM...
=KOFF= LOIS?
...SO, ANYWAY, I SAY TO PERRY, I SAY "SENATOR HASTINGS IS A LOUT..."

WEDNESDAY.
♫

♫
ALL DONE?
YUP. CUT THE LIGHTS.
WAIT. ANYONE LEFT?
NOT SO'S I NOTICED.
KLIK
=SIGH=

THURSDAY.

LOIS!

JIMMY!

GOOD THING YOU CALLED. I WAS HEADED TO THE WRONG RESTAURANT.

ME, TOO.

I THOUGHT YOU FELLAS WERE ACROSS THE *STREET.*

ME, TOO.

WHAT?

WE *WERE.* BUT HEY... "PERRY WANTS A REWRITE BY MORNING."

AH.

CODESPEAK FOR "LET'S ALL PRETEND TO CALL IT A NIGHT, THEN RECONVENE *ELSEWHERE.*" WHO'D YOU MASTERMINDS DITCH THIS TIME?

THE NEW GUY. TRENT?

KENT.

WHATEVER. WHICH ONLY REINFORCES MY POINT. THE GUY HAS THE CHARISMA OF A *MAILBOX.*

YOU HARDLY EVEN REALIZE HE'S *THERE,* AND THEN YOU REMEMBER HE'S BEEN STANDING NEXT TO YOU FOR *TEN MINUTES.* IT'S LIKE HE'S GOING OUT OF HIS *WAY* TO BE DULL.

HARSH. HE'S JUST SHY.

HE'S STRICTLY *ARTS SECTION,* PAGE FOUR, UNDER THE FOLD. NO ONE GIVES A DAMN ABOUT THAT. WE WANT *FRONT PAGE.*

BESIDES, HE'S NOT TOO SHY. YOU REALIZE HE'S GOT A CRUSH ON YOU, RIGHT?

WHO *DOESN'T?*

I'M JUST... SAYIN'...

GO ON.

!

SO HE'S DULL. HE'S NOT A *"BORE YOU WITH MIND-NUMBING JABBER"* GUY. IT'S NO CRIME TO BE *QUIET.* YOU WANT HIM TO WEAR A RED *CAPE?*

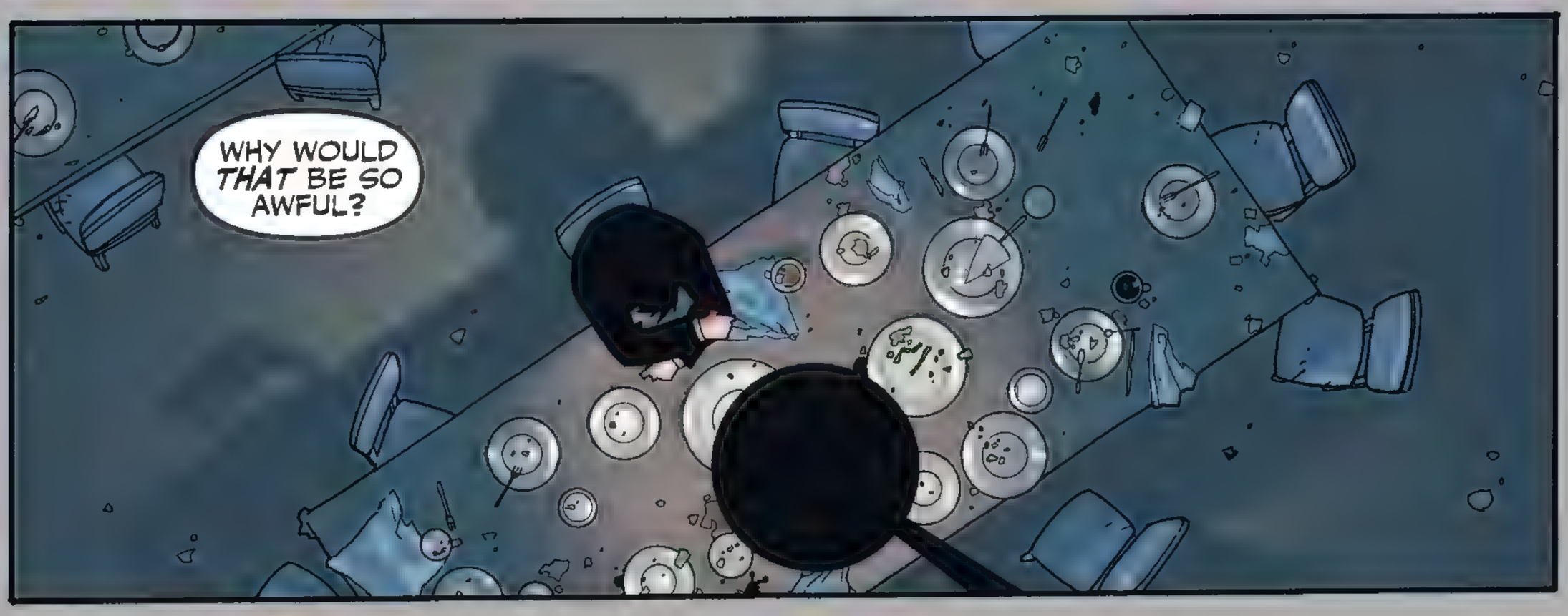
IT'S THE ONLY WAY HE'D GET *YOUR* ATTENTION.

HAR DE HAR *HAR.*

LOOK, YOU COULD AT LEAST *TRY* TO FEEL GUILTY ABOUT CUTTING KENT OUT OF YOUR LITTLE *REINDEER GAMES.*

YEAH.

HE'S NOT *HURTING* ANYBODY. WHAT IF HE WALKED IN HERE RIGHT NOW AND SAW WHAT YOU DID TO HIM?
THEN MAYBE HE'D SHOW A LITTLE *EMOTION*.
MAYBE WE'D GET A GLIMPSE AT WHAT'S *INSIDE* THAT GUY.


WHY WOULD *THAT* BE SO AWFUL?

LOIS, I'M SURE KENT *MEANS* WELL BUT

AAAAAAAAH!

SCREECH SKREEKSSH KSSH

ANYTHING ELSE FOR YOU, SIR--?

?

OFF THE *BRIDGE!* *MOVE IT!*

OH, *JESUS!* LOOK OUT, LOOK *OUT, LOOK--*

HONK HONK HONK beep HONNK beep

IZZAT *HIM?*

WHO, THE *ALIEN?* GEE, YOU *THINK?* WHAT'S HE *DOING?*

HE'S--

--YEAH! DUDE, HE'S GOT AHOLD OF THE *CABLES!*

MY GOD, *LOOK* AT HIM! GO, *SUPERMAN, GO!*

VTTTTT

DUDE'S A *HERO!*

LEXCORP

--DUDE'S A HERO!

OH, PLEASE.

FIRST, THE BANG...

...NOW, THE WHIMPER.

TAK

OH, NO...

OH, MY GOD! HE'S NOT HOLDING THE BRIDGE!

HE'S TEARING IT DOWN! RUN! RUN!

BEAUTIFUL. FRAMED LIKE A *REMBRANDT*. AND, IF MY THEORIES ARE *CORRECT*... THERE'S *ICING* ON THIS CAKE.

TAK

NOBODY *PANIC!* TAKE MY HAND AND I'LL--

-KK-KKUUHH-

HELLLP!

HELP ME! SOMEBODY HELP!

AAAAH! DON'T HURT ME! PLEASE!

I... PROMISE...

GRAB... MY ARM. ONLY... CHANCE...

THAT'S... THAT'S IT...

?

YOU SOUND HURT. ARE YOU HURT? WHAT'S WRONG?

I...

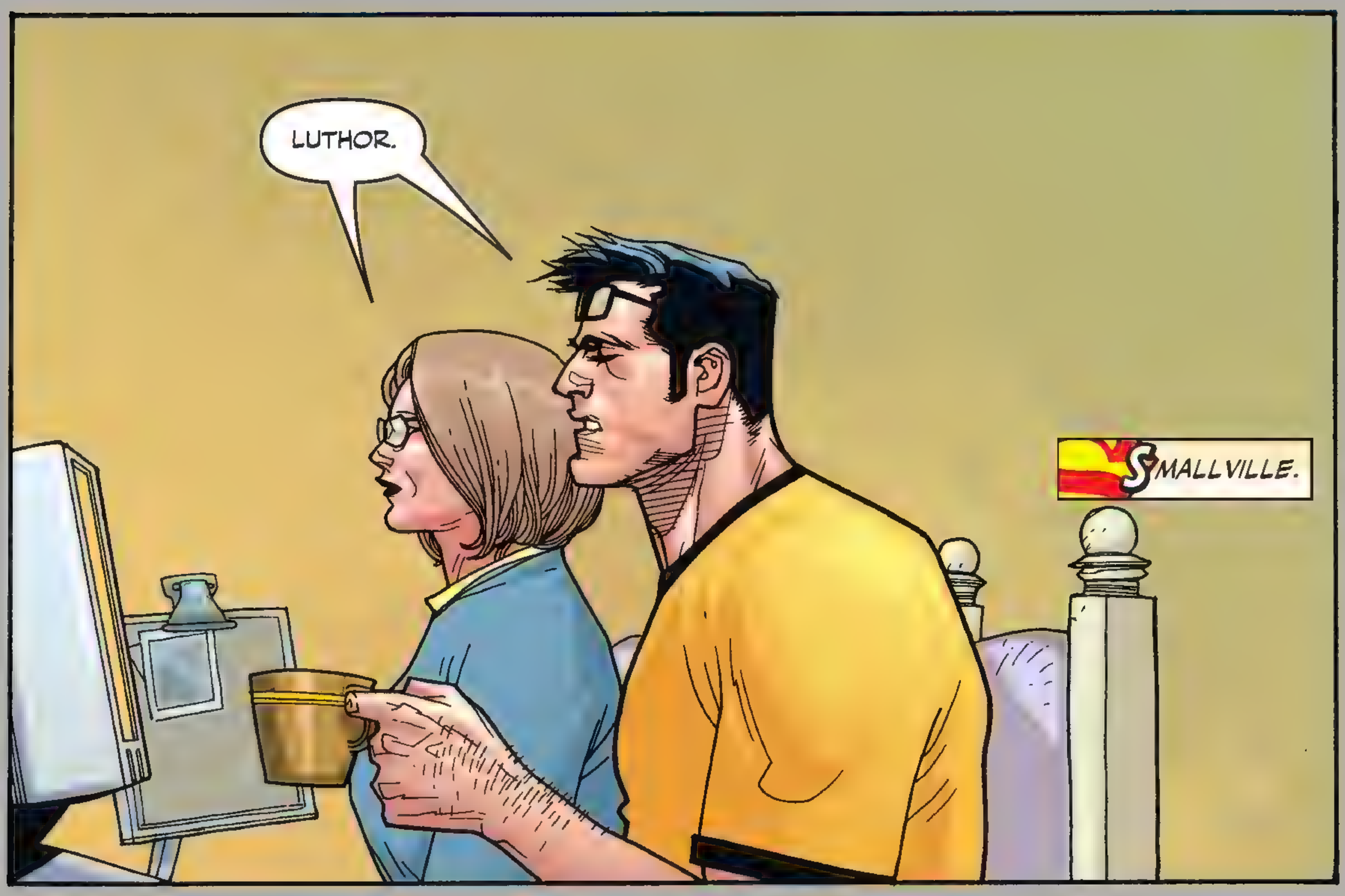
...I DON'T KNOW...

www.dailyplanet.met/index.html

DAILY PLANET

DEMOLITION MAN?

Failed Rescue or Deliberate Sabotage? Eyewitnesses Argue.
Lex Luthor Warns City To "Maintain Its Vigilance."
Offers To Match Federal Funds For Alien Investigation.



ON THE BRIDGE...THAT'S THE SAME PAIN YOU FELT WHEN YOU WERE *FIFTEEN*, RIGHT?

NAUSEA, FEVER, SUDDEN WEAKNESS...

"...IT'S NOT LIKE I CAN CATCH THE *FLU*, MA. THAT WAS *EXACTLY* LIKE WHAT I WENT THROUGH AT FIFTEEN, AND LEX WAS CONNECTED TO *THAT, TOO.*

HE'S THE KEY. HE *LIVED* HERE THAT YEAR. WE WERE *FRIENDS*. AND YOU'RE TELLING ME THERE'S NO *RECORD* OF HIM IN SMALLVILLE AT *ALL?*

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT? COUNTY CLERK? *NEWSPAPER* FILES?

PURGED, ALTERED OR *DESTROYED*. HARDLY BEYOND A MAN AS RICH AND POWERFUL AS LEX BECAME.

I SUPPOSE *PEOPLE* REMEMBER...

I ASKED AROUND, MARTHA. PRINCIPAL GOODWIN, LANA'S FAMILY...

...YOU'D BE SURPRISED AT HOW MANY FOLKS HAVE BEEN..."*ENCOURAGED*" TO CHANGE THE *SUBJECT* WHENEVER THE LUTHOR NAME CAME UP.

RICH AND POWERFUL.

I'M THINKIN'.

WHAT?

I RECOGNIZE THAT MILLION-MILE *STARE*. THE ONE THAT SAYS, "*I BLAME MYSELF.*"

CLARK, THINK *BACK*. YOU TRIED YOUR *BEST* TO *HELP* LEX.

"REMEMBER?"

MA, I'M HOME! CAN YOU SET AN EXTRA PLACE FOR DINNER?

ALWAYS. HOW WAS SCHOOL TODAY? I SEE YOU MADE A FRIEND!

WORKING ON IT. LEX, THIS IS MY ***MOM.*** MA, THIS IS ***LEX LUTHOR.*** HE'S NEW IN CLASS. FROM ***METROPOLIS.***

PLEASED TO ***MEET*** YOU, LEX. I JUST MADE ***LEMONADE.*** WOULD YOU LIKE SOME?

NO.

UMM...OKAY. THEN MAKE YOURSELF AT ***HOME,*** SWEETIE. CLARK, CAN YOU HELP ME WITH THIS ***JAR?***

SEEMS AWFULLY ***OLD*** FOR ***NINTH GRADE...***

THAT'S BECAUSE HE USED HIS ***PLACEMENT TEST*** TO DOODLE DIAGRAMS FOR A QUANTUM-POWERED ***COMPUTER*** THAT MADE MRS. HOFSTER GO ***PALE.***

PLUS, THE PRINCIPAL'S HOLDING A GRUDGE BECAUSE LEX DIDN'T ASK ***PERMISSION*** BEFORE FIXING THE ***COAL FURNACE*** IN ***FOUR MINUTES...***

...BY INVENTING AND CONSTRUCTING A CLEAN-BURNING ***HEAT PUMP*** THAT COULD PROBABLY WIN EVERY SCIENCE AWARD THERE IS.

MY. IS THAT WHY YOU'RE SO LATE?

NO. WE'RE LATE BECAUSE HE GOT DETENTION AN HOUR LATER FOR CALLING JOEY CALHOUN AN ***IGNORANT ORANGUTAN*** DURING AN ORAL QUIZ, THEN BURSTING INTO ***TEARS.***

JOEY? YOUR ***QUARTERBACK?*** OH, DEAR. LEX ISN'T DESTINED TO BE VERY POPULAR, IS HE?

HONESTLY?

I GET THE FEELING HE'S USED TO IT.

YOU SHOWED HIM AROUND. I'M PRETTY SURE LEX HAD NEVER SEEN A FARM BEFORE THAT AFTERNOON.

YOU KNOW, I ASKED HIM.

"HE JUST GRUNTED."

HI, PA. WHATCHA PUTTERING WITH?

AH, THIS OLD MILKING MACHINE'S DOWN AGAIN. THEY DON'T EVEN MAKE PARTS FOR IT ANYMORE. HOPED I COULD ***SALVAGE*** IT.

THOUGHT I HEARD YOU GIVING SOMEONE THE NICKEL TOUR. HI, I'M JONATHAN KENT.

'LO.

HEY, PA...

...WOULD IT BE OKAY IF I TOOK CARE OF MY CHORES AFTER DINNER? THEY WON'T TAKE BUT A BLINK, AND THAT WAY I CAN SPEND TIME WITH--

EEEEEEEEEE

MOOOO!

MOOOO!

WHAT IN THE--?

SHUT THAT *OFF!*

BUT--

YOU'RE SCARING THE *DEVIL* OUT OF THE *COWS*, SON! *SHUT IT OFF!*

EEEEEEEE

EEEEENNNNN

IT'S TWICE AS *EFFICIENT* NOW! WHY ARE THEY *SCARED?*

LEX, THEY'RE *COWS!*

PA, DON'T BE MAD! I'M SURE LEX WAS JUST TRYING TO PITCH *IN* AROUND--

LEX, *HOLD UP!*

LEX!

LEX, WAIT!

PA WASN'T YELLING AT YOU. HE WAS YELLING OVER THE NOISE.

LEX...

...WANT TO SEE THE COOLEST THING?

HUH. WHAT DID YOU HAVE TO DO TO GET THIS?

NOTHING. HAVE A BIRTHDAY. MY UNCLE KENDALL SENT IT. IT'S A REALLY NICE ONE.

WAIT. SOMEONE GAVE YOU THIS? FOR FREE?

THAT'S... HOW A BIRTHDAY... WORKS.

IT'S A CLEAR NIGHT. YOU CAN SEE THE CAPELLA STAR.

IT'S IN THE AURIGA CONSTELLATION. FOLLOW THE HANDLE OF THE LITTLE DIPPER TO--

I KNOW WHERE CAPELLA IS. I'M NOT *STUPID*.

I DIDN'T SAY YOU *WERE*.

BUT YOU'RE OFF BY ABOUT SIX DEGREES SOUTHWEST.

ASTRONOMY

WHICH IS THE BRIGHTER EMISSION NEBULA, ORION OR PLEIADES?

I DIDN'T THINK ANYONE ELSE IN SMALLVILLE *KNEW* THAT.

TRICK QUESTION. PLEIADES IS A REFLECTION NEBULA VISIBLE BY ITS SUPERHEATED GAS AND DUST--

--NOT ITS ACTUAL STARS--

--WHICH TEND TO BE COOLER.

VERY GOOD.

LIVE AND LEARN.

SO YOU GOING TO OPEN THIS WINDOW OR WHAT?

...AND THEN MR. HU--HE'S THE PHYSICS TEACHER?-- MR. HU ARGUED THAT THERE CAN'T BE ANYTHING ON THE SPECTRUM BETWEEN UNTRAVIOLET AND X-RAYS, THAT THERE'S NO ROOM, BUT I THINK--

--I--I MEAN, OBVIOUSLY, NOT THAT I COULD ***BASE*** THIS ON ANYTHING, BUT--WHAT IF HE'S ***WRONG?***

"CAN'T BE ANYTHING." CLARK, HOW DO YOU FIND THE STRENGTH TO GET OUT OF ***BED*** IN THE MORNING?

WEIRD. I FIGURED I'D BE FREEZING OUT HERE, BUT THERE'S A WARM CURRENT.

PROBABLY FROM THE HOUSE.

MY MOM CALLED YOUR DAD. HE SAID YOU COULD STAY OUT AS LONG AS YOU WANTED.

BECAUSE HE CARES.

I'M NEVER GOING TO FIT IN HERE, AM I?

IN SMALL-VILLE? SURE, I THINK IF YOU--

NO. HERE.

WHAT, ***EARTH?***

I'M SORRY. I THOUGHT YOU WERE JOKING.

NEVER MIND. YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND, ANYWAY.

DON'T BE SO POSITIVE.

YEAH? YOU HONESTLY KNOW WHAT THIS FEELS LIKE?

REALLY, FARMBOY?

CLARK! LEX! SUPPER'S READY!

THAT BOY WAS *GOOD* FOR YOU.

FOR A WHILE.

HE JUST...

...I MEAN, NOT THAT YOU AND MA *COULDN'T*...BUT HE *GOT* IT. WASN'T OFTEN I COULD EASE HIM INTO A REAL *CONVERSATION*, BUT WHEN I DID, HE *GOT* IT.

WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO SEE THINGS NO ONE ELSE ON EARTH HAD *EYES* FOR, YOU KNOW? PA...I NEVER HAD A FRIEND LIKE THAT.

I'M SURE. BUT A MAN CAN CHANGE IN TEN YEARS, CLARK.

ESPECIALLY ONE SO FUNDAMANENTALLY ABUSED AND DISTURBED AS *LEX* WAS.

YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN. IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE HE'S THE SAME GUY.

EXCEPT FOR...

THE METEORITE.

EXCEPT FOR THAT. I ALWAYS ASSUMED HE'D *LOST* IT IN THE *FIRE* AND THE *EXPLOSION* THAT AFTERNOON... AND LET'S TALK ABOUT *THAT*...BUT...

"...BUT WHAT IF HE *DIDN'T?*"

MONDAY, 6:30 P.M. NOTES TO SELF:

I HAVE CLOSED ECHO PARK LABS DOWN, OBSTENSIBLY FOR *REFURBISHMENT.*

SO AS TO ALLAY ANY *INTERFERENCE* ON THEIR PART AS I *WORK,* I HAVE PUT ALL EMPLOYEES ON DOUBLE-SALARY *LEAVE.* A NICE *TOUCH,* THAT.

THE BRIDGE TEST WAS A *GAMBLE.* I HATED TO RISK LOSING A PRECIOUS PIECE OF THE GREEN *XENOMINERAL* IN MY POSSESSION.

HOWEVER, THE *PAYOFF* EXCEEDED MY *WILDEST HOPES.*

SUPERMAN'S MOLECULAR STRUCTURE, AS I'D SUSPECTED, IS UNIQUELY VULNERABLE TO THE METEORITE'S *RADIATION.*

GIVEN PROLONGED *EXPOSURE,* ITS RAYS COULD IN ALL LIKELIHOOD ELIMINATE HIM *ALTOGETHER.*

AND TO THINK...

...THAT ISN'T EVEN IT'S PRIMARY *VALUE.*

AS A BOY, I STOOD AT THIS VERY THRESHOLD AND--IN ONE BITTER MOMENT-- WAS ***DENIED*** THE CULMINATION OF A LIFETIME'S ***DREAMS*** AND ***LABORS.***

IT HAS TAKEN ME A FULL ***DECADE*** TO RECONSTRUCT MY DESIGNS AND CALCULATIONS. NOW, TEN YEARS LATER, THAT MOMENT STANDS BEFORE ME ***AGAIN...***

ACTIVATE SUBSPACE ***TRANSLATOR.***

...DISCOVERY A ***PHANTOM ZONE...***

...ANTI-GRAVITY...

...TELEPATHIC SENSORS...

...AND DEAR ***GOD...*** SUCESS IS SWEETER THAN I COULD EVER HAVE ***IMAGINED...***

SCOPE 1

THIS IS THE SPOT.

AS I RECALL, BULLDOZERS AND LANDSCAPERS OVERRAN THE WRECKAGE PRACTICALLY THE NEXT ***DAY,*** BUT...YEAH, THIS IS IT.

PLUS, REMEMBER THE VIEW? THE LUTHOR HOUSE OVERLOOKED ALL OF ***SMALLVILLE.*** I WOULD LIKE TO THINK NOT ON ***PURPOSE,*** BUT...

PROBABLY.

PROBABLY.

SO THE METEOR LEX HAD ISN'T BURIED HERE.

NO. I'D ASSUMED IT'D BEEN DESTROYED IN THE ***BLAST,*** BUT HE MUST HAVE SAVED IT. AND NOW THAT WE'RE GROWN UP, HE'S USING IT ON ***ME.*** ***INTENTIONALLY*** THIS TIME. SMART.

HE WAS A SMART BOY. YOU BOTH WERE.

I JUST READ REALLY FAST, PA. LEX WAS BORN AN ABSOLUTE ***GENIUS...***

"...AND WHAT'S SCARY WAS, HIS KNOWLEDGE WASN'T LIMITED TO THE ***LAB SCIENCES.***"

...THUS CREATING THE UNDERPINNINGS OF WHAT INVESTIGATORS CALL ***DEDUCTIVE REASONING.***

WHO CAN GIVE SOME EXAMPLES OF DEDUCTION AND HOW IT FOLLOWS OBSERVATION? LEX?

LEX? MR. LUTHOR, AM I ***BORING*** YOU?

NO, YOU'RE BORING ***THEM.*** I'M ***BEYOND*** BORED.

WEIRDO.

HOW ***DARE*** YOU, YOUNG MAN!

NO. HOW DARE ***YOU?*** WHY DO YOU HAVE TO MAKE THIS MATERIAL ***SO DRY?***

IF YOU WANT TO ***TEACH*** DEDUCTIVE REASONING, MAKE IT ***RELEVANT.***

FOR INSTANCE, WE KNOW THAT ***PAUL CHO*** CUT ***CHEMISTRY*** BECAUSE THERE'S MUD ON HIS SHOES AND IT ONLY STARTED RAINING AFTER ***FIRST PERIOD.***

WE KNOW THAT ***ROLAND MCGINLEY*** IS LANA LANG'S *"SECRET ADMIRER"* BECAUSE HE'S GOT THE ONLY CLASS SCHEDULE THAT ROUTES HIM PAST HER LOCKER AT THE ***EXACT*** TIMES THOSE FRIGHTENINGLY GOOEY ***NOTES*** WERE LEFT.

JACOB STEWART NERVOUSLY SNEAKED HIS PAINT-FLECKED KEY FROM HIS ***BELT*** INTO HIS ***POCKET*** BECAUSE ***JACK TARGONI*** BELLOWED THAT *"SOME **SUICIDE CASE**"* HAD SCRATCHED UP HIS ***FORD RANGER***--

OH, GOD...

THE CORRS

--AND-- LET'S SEE, WHO ELSE HAS SECRETS--?

--YOU'RE TRYING TO PASS A ***MEN'S SHIRT*** OFF AS A ***BLOUSE*** THE DAY AFTER YOU AND ***COACH BORDEN*** SPENT THE NIGHT AT AN *"EDUCATION SEMINAR."*

TA-DA.

SEE ME AFTER CLASS.
BUT--
SPAZ.
MISS CAMERON, I THINK LEX WAS JUST TRYING TO HELP ILLUSTRATE--
AND YOU, TOO. MR. CLARK SMARTMOUTH KENT!
--IN HIS WAY.
YOU KNOW, ASSOCIATING WITH YOU ISN'T EXACTLY IMPROVING MY SOCIAL PROFILE.
AMONG PHILISTINES? I'M DOING YOU A FAVOR.
"THEN THERE WAS THE WEEK LEX DISCOVERED CIVICS."
The Political Writings Of John Adams
Plato's Republic
The Rights Of Man Thomas Paine
THE JEFFERSON HEBLE - Thomas Jefferson
Great Speeches Franklin D. Roosevelt
OUT.
NO, SEE, I WROTE UP SOME NOTES. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS READ--
I'M A BUSY MAN, SON. I DON'T HAVE TIME TO GRADE A BOOK REPORT.
MAYOR PARR
THIS ISN'T--
WHATEVER. SHOULDN'T YOU BE IN CLASS? MRS. TRUMBLE, CALL THE HIGH SCHOOL AND TELL THEM THERE'S A TRUANT STUDENT IN MY OFFICE!

WHAT IN THE WORLD IS *THIS?*

DUNNO. THAT KID FLUNG IT IN MY *WASTEBASKET* AND STORMED *OUT*. "A REVISED PLAN FOR CITY GOVERNMENT"? WAIT. IS THIS *VIABLE...?*

KID. PRANK. SO, DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE COACH AND EMMA CAMERON...?

"LEX ALWAYS PLAYED IT OFF, BUT I COULD TELL WHAT GNAWED AT HIM THE WORST, WHAT MADE HIM FEEL MOST ALONE, WAS THE EXPRESSION PRETTY MUCH EVERYONE BUT ME HAD SHOWED HIM BY THEN-- NOT JUST IN SCHOOL, BUT ALL OVER SMALLVILLE.

"UNDERNEATH ALL THAT SCORN AND MOCKING, LEX SAW IT BRIGHT AS DAY ON FOLKS' FACES. IT WAS FEAR.

"NOT TERROR, JUST...UNEASE. THE SAD TRUTH IS, PEOPLE ARE AFRAID OF WHAT THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND...

"...OR AT LEAST, CAN'T *COMMUNICATE* WITH.

"THAT LEX CAME FROM *MONEY* ONLY CREATED *ANOTHER* SOCIAL BARRIER FOR HIM. WHEN HE OFFERED DESIGNS AND FINANCING FOR A NEW HIGH SCHOOL *STADIUM*, THE ADMINISTRATION, ALREADY LEERY OF LEX, SAID THANK YOU, NO.

"BAD MOVE."

RAISE THAT SCORE SEVEN MORE! SMALLVILLE! *SMALLVILLE!*

WATER?

WHEW. THANKS, CLARK. MAN, WE'RE GETTING *CREAMED* OUT THERE TONIGHT.

LANA...UMM... I WAS...I WAS WONDERING IF...

...WELL, THE HOMECOMING-- I MEAN--I-- *HOMECOMING* DANCE...

...IT'S COMING UP, AND IF DON'T ALREADY--I MEAN, I--I'M SURE YOU *DO*, BUT--

LANA?

HOLD THAT *LINE* EVERY *TIME--!*

NEVER MIND.

JEEZ, WHAT'RE WE DOING *WRONG* OUT THERE?

IT'S OKAY, BABY! NURSE LANA WILL MAKE IT ALL BETTER AFTER THE GAME.

GOD, HOW'D THEY GET SO *GOOD* ALL OF A SUDDEN?

"IT WAS A FAIR QUESTION. BRIGHTONBURG HADN'T WON A GAME SINCE THE *REAGAN* ADMINISTRATION, BUT THEY WERE A *JUGGERNAUT* THAT NIGHT. IN FACT, EVERYONE'S EYES WERE SO *GLUED* TO THE FIELD...

"...THAT THEIR COACH COULD WANDER, RELATIVELY *UNNOTICED*, TO THE *SIDELINES* EVERY FEW MINUTES."

PROBABILITY SAYS SMALLVILLE'S ABOUT TO ROLL OUT TO THE LEFT FOR A PASS. HERE'S YOUR BLITZ PATTERN.

DEVIATE ONE IOTA AND I GUARANTEE THEY'LL GAIN 19. FOLLOW IT, YOU'LL RUN THE RESULTANT FUMBLE FOR 25.

YOU SURE, KID?

NO, IT'S *COINCIDENCE* THAT THE SCORE IS 49-ZIP. *YES*, I'M SURE.

COME BACK IN FIVE AND I'LL HAVE YOUR ENTIRE THIRD QUARTER MAPPED OUT.

"THE FINAL SCORE SET A RECORD IN THE *STATE*, NETTED THEIR COACH A UNIVERSITY POSITION, AND BANKRUPTED MORE THAN ONE *BOOKIE*. A LOT OF PEOPLE WALKED AWAY FROM THAT GAME *PROUD* OR *RICHER* OR *BOTH*."

CATCH.

?

IT'S NOT THE ACTUAL GAME BALL, BUT IT SHOULD BE. YOU SURE EARNED IT.

LEX-777

WAS I THAT OBVIOUS?

TO ANYBODY THAT KNOWS YOU. RIGHT NOW, BE THANKFUL THAT I *AM* THAT *LIST.*

LEX, I AM *ASKING* YOU AS YOUR *FRIEND*--DON'T *EVER* DO THAT AGAIN.

"SMALLVILLE WENT UNDEFEATED FOR THE REST OF THE SEASON.

"I NEVER KNEW MUCH ABOUT LEX'S UPBRINGING, BUT IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN PLEASANT. FROM WHAT LITTLE HE HINTED AT, I GATHER LEX WAS ISOLATED FROM HIS FOLKS PRACTICALLY FROM BIRTH. ONE GLANCE AT HIS I.Q. TESTS, AND THEY ENCOURAGED LEX AROUND THE CLOCK--TO MAKE HIM RICH.

"THEY SAW HIM AS THE NEXT *EINSTEIN,* AND THEY WERE *UNDERESTIMATING* HIM. I WISH THEY'D BEEN AS CONCERNED WITH HIS SOCIAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT AS THEY WERE WITH HIS *INTELLECTUAL* GROWTH, BUT HIS MOM DIED WHEN HE WAS YOUNG, AND HIS FATHER WAS--WELL--"

"--NOT WARM."

LEX ISN'T HOME.

COULD I WAIT FOR HIM?

NO.

OKAY.

IGNORE HIM, CLARK. I DO.

WHY AREN'T YOU AT PAUL'S BIRTHDAY PARTY?

WASN'T INVITED. IS THAT A METAL DETECTOR?

WOW. THAT'S A *COOL* ONE! THERE'S ONE IN OUR ATTIC, BUT IT'S KINDA OLD.

FOUND SOME NEAT *COINS* WITH IT ONCE, THOUGH. I KNOW WHERE WE CAN LOOK FOR *MORE...*

KLIK

SO DO I. THE BANK. THIS ISN'T *STORE-BOUGHT*, CLARK. I PUT *MONTHS* INTO THIS. JUST NOW INSTALLED THE LAST *CIRCUIT*.

I DIDN'T BUILD IT TO SEARCH FOR *WHEATBACK PENNIES.*

THEN WHAT?

?

WELL?

EXTRATERRESTRIAL MATTER, CLARK.

I USED METEORITES TO CALIBRATE IT TO DETECT ANYTHING WITH A MOLECULAR PATTERN NOT OF THIS EARTH.

AND IF IT'S WAILING AT *YOU*, FARMBOY--

UWEEEEEEE

--THEN IT DOESN'T WORK!

IT DOESN'T WORK!

HEY! HEY! STOP! YOU'LL HURT YOURSELF!

LEX!

IF IT'S NOT RIGHT, THEN IT'S WORTHLESS!

WORTHLESS!

LEX...

...STUPID AND WORTHLESS...

NASA
1989

YOU NEVER TOLD ME THAT STORY.

WELL, I HAVE A HALF-DOZEN PRETTY SIMILAR. AND EVERY ONE OF THEM ENDS WITH LEX ISOLATING HIMSELF IN THAT HOUSE FOR LONGER AND LONGER.

EVENTUALLY, I KNEW ONE OR THE OTHER WAS GOING TO TOTALLY UNRAVEL, PA-- EITHER SMALLVILLE'S SMARTEST BOY, OR IT'S BIGGEST SECRET.

"SO I MADE A DECISION."

I'M GOING TO GO SEE LEX.

REALLY? YOU HAVEN'T SPENT TIME WITH HIM FOR A ***WEEK.***

TWO. HE'S HOLED UP IN THAT ***LAB*** HE COBBLED TOGETHER ON THE SIDE OF HIS HOUSE.

WHAT'S HE DOING IN THERE?

MISSING SCHOOL. OTHER THAN THAT, I COULDN'T TELL YOU. TRIED LOOKING THROUGH THE WALLS, BUT THEY'RE LINED WITH LEAD. DON'T KNOW ***WHAT'S*** IN THERE--HE'S NEVER LET ANYONE THROUGH THE ***DOOR.***

MAKES ME AFRAID HE'S FOOLING AROUND WITH ***RADIATION***-- THOUGH WHERE HE GOT RADIOACTIVE STUFF IN ***SMALLVILLE*** IS BEYOND ***ME.***

LEX? LEX, IT'S ***CLARK,*** I KNOW YOU'RE ***IN*** THERE. OPEN ***UP,*** OKAY? I WANT TO ***TELL*** YOU SOMETHING.

C'MON! I BROUGHT A ***PEACE OFFERING!***

WHAT COULD YOU POSSIBLY HAVE THAT WOULD INTEREST ME?

...

COME IN.

HOLY COW. YOU *MADE* ALL THIS?

OUT OF THE BEST SPIT AND BALING WIRE SMALLVILLE HAD TO *OFFER,* FARMBOY. I HAVE A CONFESSION TO MAKE. I WAS *HOPING* YOU'D COME BY TO BE MY *WITNESS.*

AND THAT YOU'D BRING SOMETHING TO TAKE *NOTES* WITH.

BECAUSE IF YOU WERE A *REPORTER,* CLARK, YOU'D WIN A *PULITZER* TONIGHT.

TRANSLATION?

THIS IS *IT,* CLARK! THIS IS THE *WEEK!* BY FRIDAY, SATURDAY AT THE LATEST, EVERYTHING I'VE LABORED FOR MY *ENTIRE LIFE* IS GOING TO PAY *OFF!* DO YOU *HEAR* ME?

CLARK, I'M GOING TO MAKE *HISTORY!*

SLOWER.

NO. *FASTER.* FASTER AND *FURTHER* AND ACROSS THE *STARS* AT BETTER THAN *LIGHT SPEED,* CLARK! AND *YOU! ARE! THERE!*

WHERE?

DO YOU KNOW WHY--OF ALL THE AMAZING, CUTTING-EDGE, TECHNOCENTRIC CITIES ON EARTH--I CAME TO *THIS* JERKWATER BURG?

I ASSUMED YOUR *DAD* MOVED YOU HERE.

NO, I MOVED *HIM.* YEARS AGO, WHILE TRAVELING, I *UNEARTHED* SOMETHING IN SMALLVILLE--

--SOMETHING THAT VALIDATED *EVERY SINGLE THEORY* I HAVE *EVER HAD* THAT WE ARE *NOT ALONE* IN THIS UNIVERSE.

UH-HUH...?

SEE FOR *YOURSELF.* THIS-- A *RADIOTELESCOPE RECEIVER* MORE SOPHISTICATED THAN ANYTHING EVER *ENVISIONED*-- WAS BUILT *AROUND* IT.

ALL THAT'S LEFT IS TO FINISH THE TRANSFORMER. THAT'LL ALLOW ME TO SAFELY CREATE A STRONG ENOUGH ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELD TO CONTAIN THE *WORMHOLE.* YOU KNOW WHAT *THAT* IS, RIGHT?

IT'S A TUNNEL THROUGH *SPACE* AND *TIME.* IT'S ALSO *SCIENCE FICTION.*

IF YOU'RE *STEPHEN HAWKING,* YES! THINK *BIGGER!*

CLARK, START *WRITING! "EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD IN PODUNK REDEFINES PHYSICS!"* I'VE FIGURED OUT A WAY TO OPEN A *PORTAL* INTO THE PAST OF ANOTHER *GALAXY!*

WHAT I'VE *DISCOVERED*--IT WILL ACT AS A *BEACON* ACROSS THE *UNIVERSE!* IT WILL ALLOW US TO *TRACE* AND MAKE *CONTACT* WITH ITS WORLD OF *ORIGIN!*

"IT!" "IT!" LEX, WHAT IS THIS *"IT"*?

KLAK

THIS.

THE METEORITE INSIDE THIS LEAD BOX IS THE HEART OF THE ENTIRE APPARATUS. IT GIVES OFF A ***UNIQUE RADIATION*** THAT IS ***INEXPLICABLY CLEAN,*** CLARK-- AND, AS IMPOSSIBLE AS IT ***SOUNDS, COMPLETELY HARMLESS.***

"NO.

"NOT COMPLETELY.

"IT DIDN'T MATTER THAT I WAS SPEECHLESS. I DIDN'T KNOW ANY WORDS TO DESCRIBE THE WAY THE METEORITE'S RAYS HIT ME.

"IT WAS AS IF MY BLOOD HAD BEEN REPLACED BY ***BATTERY ACID...*** LIKE ALL THE GRAVITY I'D ***IGNORED*** OVER THE YEARS HAD SUDDENLY DECIDED TO YANK MY ***MUSCLES*** FROM MY ***BONES.*** I'D ***NEVER*** FELT ANYTHING AT ALL ***LIKE*** IT.

"I'M SURE MY FACE WAS A MASK OF ABJECT PAIN, BUT THE ***WORST*** PART WAS...

"...THAT'S NOT THE WAY LEX READ MY ***EXPRESSION.***"

YOU IGNORANT ***JACKASS.***

GET AWAY FROM ME!

LEX... IT'S =NNGH= IT'S NOT Y--

SHUT UP, YOU STUPID HICK FARMBOY!

YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW THAT LOOK?

LEX, YOU DON'T UNDER... *UNDERSTAND...*

I UNDERSTAND *COMPLETELY* NOW! YOU'RE *JUST LIKE THE REST OF THEM!*

YOU'RE *AFRAID* OF ME BECAUSE YOU THINK I'M A *FREAK! FINE! GET OUT!*

I'D TELL YOU TO GO TO *HELL*, YOU PATHETIC *YOKEL*, BUT YOU ALREADY *LIVE* THERE!

WELL, THIS BACKWATER *CANNOT PUNISH* ME BY *DRAGGING ME DOWN WITH IT!* AS OF THIS MOMENT, *YOU* AND YOUR CRUMMY *PARENTS* AND--

--AND *ALL OF SMALLVILLE* DOES NOT *EXIST* AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED! YOU *HEAR* ME?

*NOTHING GOOD WILL **EVER** COME OUT OF THIS HICK TOWN BUT **LEX LUTHOR!***

NOTHING!

TONIGHT. *NOW.* REROUTE THE ELECTRICALS AND...

AAAHHH!

...AND BYPASS BREAKERS TWO AND *FOUR* AND I CAN...

LEX, I'M SORRY! LET ME IN!

CHAOS!

THE POWER GRID...OH, GOD, WHAT'S HE DOING...?

LEX!

THAT'S IT... ALMOST... ALMOST...

CONTACT!

YEAH! I DID IT! I REALLY--

OVERLOAD
EM FIELD BREACHED

NOOOOO!

THE COMPUTERS! ALL MY NOTES--!

GOD, THE METEORITE!

AAAHH!

SON...?

SON, HELP MEEEE!

"ALL THIS AND I WAS OSTENSIBLY THE LUCKY ONE. THE EXPLOSION HAD FLUNG ME HUNDREDS OF FEET AWAY. I WASN'T REALLY HURT, BUT MY STRENGTH WAS TOTALLY GONE. ONLY MY STRENGTH.

"NOT MY SUPER-HEARING. AND NOT MY X-RAY VISION.

"THOSE WORKED JUST FINE."

"BY THE TIME THE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT ARRIVED, EVERYTHING--INCLUDING LEX'S FATHER--WAS *CINDER* AND *ASH.*

"I BLACKED OUT, BUT NOT BEFORE I OVERHEARD LEX SCREAMING AT THE FIREMEN."

CHARLIE, OVER HERE! THE LUTHOR BOY'S BURNED, BUT HE'S *ALIVE!* SON, RELAX--

RELAX? DON'T YOU *TOUCH* ME! YOU DID THIS *DELIBERATELY!*

WHAT'S HE TALKING ABOUT? HE'S IN *SHOCK*--

YOU *COULD HAVE SAVED MY FATHER! YOU COULD HAVE SAVED THIS HOUSE!*

BUT *NO!* YOU HAYSEEDS SAT AROUND YOUR *CRACKER BARREL* AND WATCHED *"THOSE LUTHORS" BURN!* WAS IT *ENTERTAINING?*

SON, WE GOT HERE AS FAST AS WE--

CHARLIE, *HOLD HIM!* HE'S GETTING *AWAY!*

KID, COME *BACK! COME BACK...!*

JACK, THIS WAY! ISN'T THIS THE *KENT* BOY...?

AND THAT WAS THE LAST ANYONE IN THIS TOWN EVER HEARD FROM LEX LUTHOR-- DIRECTLY, ANYWAY.

THE NEXT DAY, I WATCHED THE CONSTRUCTION AND HAZMAT TEAMS HE HIRED ALL BUT SALT THE *EARTH* TO ERADICATE ANY EVIDENCE OF HIS FIGURATIVE *FOOTPRINTS.*

TEN YEARS LATER, HE DOESN'T CARE ABOUT *WHERE* HE STEPS--OR ON *WHO.*

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, CLARK.

WHATEVER LEX'S HARDSHIPS WERE, THAT ***DARKNESS*** WAS INSIDE HIM BEFORE YOU EVER ***MET.***

I DON'T CARE IF HE'S MORE ***CHARMING*** NOW, OR MORE ***ARTICULATE...*** LEX ***CHOSE*** TO MAKE HIMSELF INTO THE MAN HE IS TODAY.

IF YOU STILL WANT TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIM, THEN CONCENTRATE ON ***STOPPING*** HIM BEFORE HE HURTS ANYONE ***ELSE.***

AND HOPE HE DOESN'T SEE THROUGH MY ***DISGUISE.***

HE'S NOT ***LOOKING,*** CLARK, REMEMBER?

"NOTHING GOOD WILL EVER COME OUT OF THIS HICK TOWN BUT LEX LUTHOR."

HOPEFULLY, SO LONG AS YOU'RE ALWAYS EXTRA-CAREFUL AROUND LEX IN ***BOTH*** YOUR IDENTITIES...

...EVEN IF HE ***WANTED*** TO LINK ***SUPERMAN*** TO ***SMALLVILLE,*** HIS EGO WOULDN'T ***ALLOW*** IT.

THERE'LL ALWAYS BE THAT DANGER, THOUGH.

IT'S A DANGEROUS JOB.

FORTUNATELY, YOU'RE DAMN GOOD AT IT.

METROPOLIS.

MORNING, JIM. HOW WAS YOUR WEEKEND?

DAILY PLANET

JIM...?

...TOO GOOD TO BE *TRUE*... WHO KNEW HE WAS...?

WHAT...WHAT DO WE DO *NOW*...?

WHAT WAS *THAT* ABOUT?

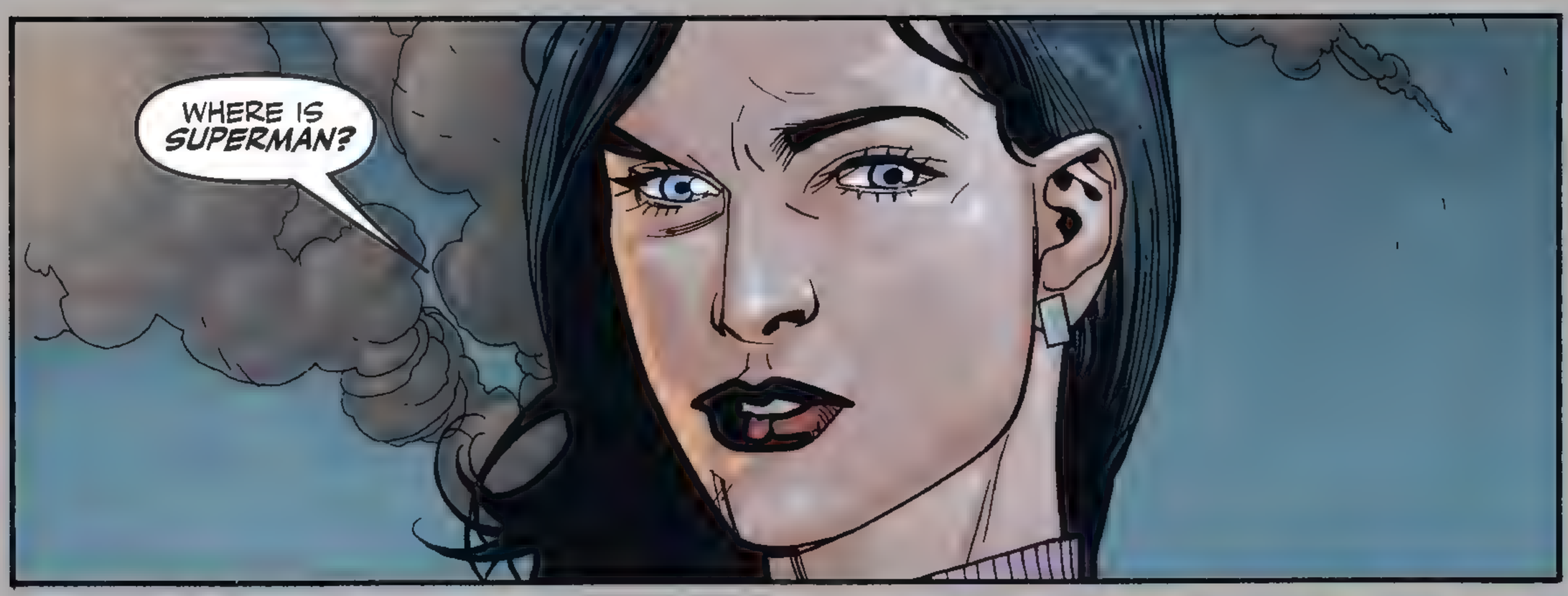
LOIS? MR. WHITE? I'VE BEEN AWAY A COUPLE OF DAYS. I MISS ANYTHING...

...NEWSWORTHY...?

EARTH UNDER ATTACK

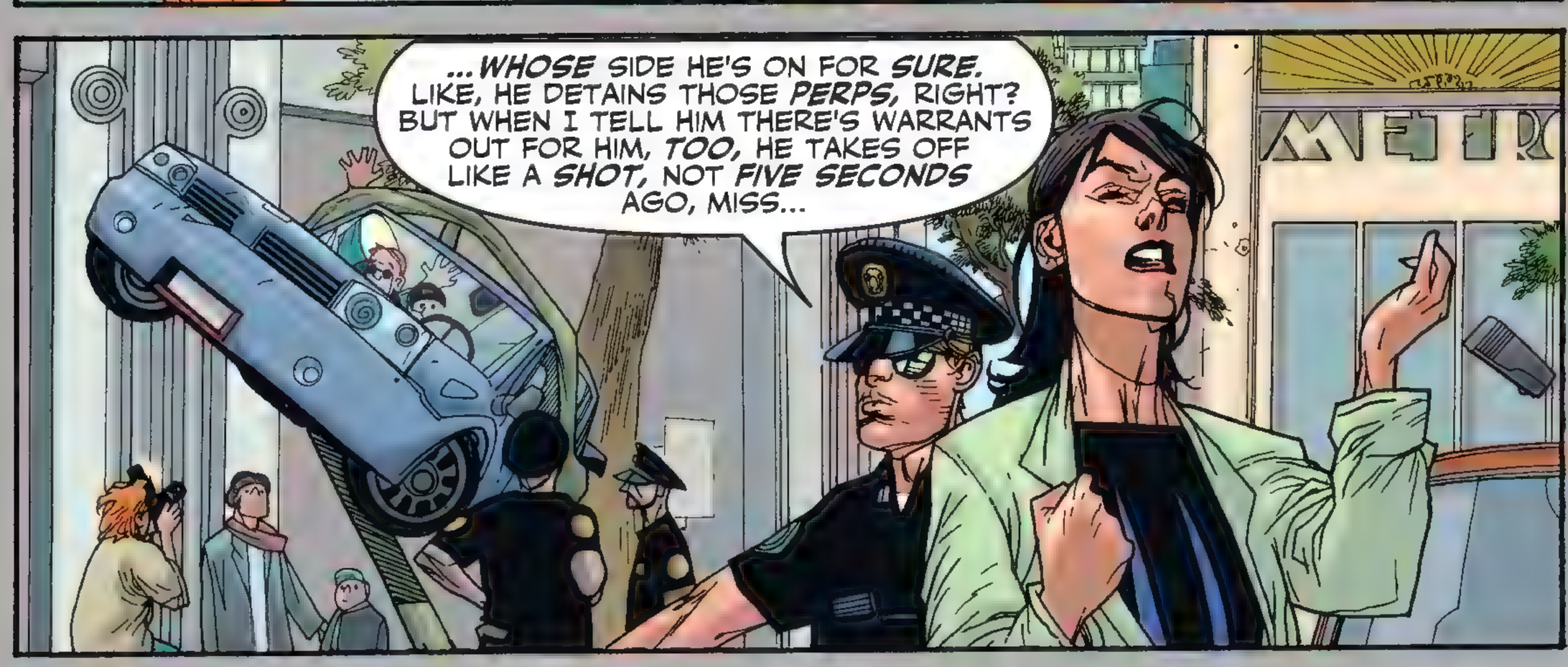
Lex Luthor Provides Photo Evidence of Alien Warships with Familiar Crest
Pentagon: Superman "Just the First"; Vanguard of Imminent Alien Invasion

WHAT?


WHERE IS SUPERMAN?

YOU JUST MISSED HIM, LADY. I DIDN'T SEE HIM MYSELF, MIND YOU, BUT THAT WATER TOWER DIDN'T DUMP ITSELF ON THIS FIRE. SOMETHING...
46

EMERGENCY
...BLURRED THROUGH MY EMERGENCY ROOM SPREADING GOD ONLY KNOWS WHAT KIND OF EXTRATERRESTRIAL BACTERIA AND PATHOGENS. I'VE ALREADY CALLED IN THE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL TO CLEAN UP.
YES, SOME PATIENTS--MOSTLY THOSE ON PAINKILLERS, MIND YOU--CLAIM THIS "SUPERMAN" STOPPED THE EAST WING HAZMAT SPILL, BUT I DON'T KNOW...


...WHOSE SIDE HE'S ON FOR SURE. LIKE, HE DETAINS THOSE PERPS, RIGHT? BUT WHEN I TELL HIM THERE'S WARRANTS OUT FOR HIM, TOO, HE TAKES OFF LIKE A SHOT, NOT FIVE SECONDS AGO, MISS...

...LOIS LANE, DAILY PLANET.

I RECOGNIZE THE NAME. I'M SORRY YOU FOUND US. YOU HAD A LOT OF ENEMIES IN THE GIACOMO FAMILY, MISS LANE.

"HAD"?

FORGIVE ME. UNLIKE YOU, I'M NO WRITER...

DAILY PLANET
LOIS LANE

...BUT IT SEEMS LIKE PAST TENSE IS THE MOST APPROPRIATE CHOICE.

OBVIOUSLY, WE COULD SIMPLY KILL YOU BY METH, BUT REALLY...

...WHY WASTE A PERFECTLY GOOD HIGH?

BLAM BLAM BLAM

BLAM BLAM BLAM

GOD... *THERE* YOU ARE.

ABOUT *TIME.*

I HAVE A LOT OF QUESTIONS FOR YOU!
CAN THEY WAIT?
N--
YES.
IT'S HIM!
WHOA! WHOA! HOLD YOUR FIRE! SUPERMAN, WE HAVE A MESSAGE FOR Y--

WHAT COULD YOU *POSSIBLY* HAVE TO SAY THAT I WOULD WANT TO HEAR?

OH, JESUS...

WE...WE...

...WE WERE TOLD TO M-MAKE YOU AN *OFFER.*

MUH-MISTER *GIACOMO* FIGURES THAT WHEN THE *INVASION* C-COMES, YOU GUYS'LL NEED AN *OPERATIONS NETWORK.* HE CAN PROVIDE THAT. HE... HE PROPOSES AN *ALLIANCE.*

H-HERE. I'VE GUH-GOT HIM ON THE *PHONE...*

YEAH, TONY, PUT HIM ON. HELLO?

HELLO? DAMN IT, IS ANYBODY *THERE?*

YOU KNOW, HE HAS A PLANE, TOO.

DON'T TEMPT ME.

THAT'LL KEEP HIS FAT FINGERS OUT OF THE ***HOB'S BAY*** AREA FOR A WHILE. BIG OF YOU TO LEAVE HIS GOONS ON THE PIER.

DID THEY HURT YOU? DO YOU NEED A ***DOCTOR?***

NO, BUT THE FACT THAT YOU ***ASKED*** CERTAINLY BOLSTERS ***MY*** SUPPOSITION.

LUTHOR CLAIMS THAT YOU'RE THE SENTRY FOR A RACE OF ***ALIEN WARMONGERS.*** BECAUSE HE'S GOT AN EINSTEIN-LEVEL ***RESUMÉ,*** THAT ACCUSATION'S MAKING ***HEADLINES*** AND ***HEADWAY.***

YOU'RE WANTED FOR QUESTIONING BY THE COPS, THE FEDS, THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, AND QUITE POSSIBLY THE ***UNITED NATIONS.***

AND YET...

AND YET, EVEN THOUGH OUR TOTAL CONVERSATIONS DON'T ADD UP TO ***THREE MINUTES,*** I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU A LOT LONGER THAN ***THAT...***

...AND ALL EVIDENCE INDICATES THAT YOU'RE A GOOD MAN HERE TO ***HELP.***

THEN WHY IS EVERYONE SO EAGER TO LISTEN TO ***LUTHOR?***

BECAUSE HE'S ***LOUD.*** BECAUSE THERE AREN'T MANY OF US WHO KNOW HE'S A ***VILE, VILE MAN.***

BECAUSE HE KNOWS HOW TO ***AMPLIFY*** THE FEAR THAT ***DRIVES*** PEOPLE AND HOW TO TRICK THEM INTO TURNING TO HIM FOR ***PROTECTION.***

YOU CAN'T SHOW UP NOWADAYS AND BE A ***SUPER-FRIEND.*** WE ARE A ***SKEPTICAL LOT.***

GOVERNMENT...ADVERTISING...GOD HELP ME, THE ***MEDIA...*** THESE THINGS MANIPULATE US 24/7, AND WORSE, WE ***KNOW*** IT. WE CLAIM TO ***FIGHT*** IT, BUT MOST OF US DON'T HAVE THE ***ENERGY*** TO STRUGGLE EVERY MOMENT OF EVERY ***DAY.***

WEAR US ***DOWN*** ENOUGH, AND THE LESSON WE EVENTUALLY TAKE TO ***HEART*** IS THAT IT'S EASIER AND SAFER TO BE ***CYNICAL*** THAN IT IS TO ***TRUST*** SOMEONE.

DO ***YOU*** TRUST ME?

I WANT TO. I WANT US ***ALL*** TO. I WOULD ***LOVE*** TO PROVE THAT THESE *"PHOTOS"* OF ***ALIEN WARSHIPS*** LUTHOR'S SUBSPACE CAMERAS ARE *"PROVIDING"* ARE DIGITAL ***PRANKS.***

BUT I NEED ***YOUR*** SIDE OF THIS STORY TO DROWN OUT LUTHOR'S ***RAVINGS.***

IF HE'S ***LYING,*** WHO ***ARE*** YOU? ***ARE*** YOU AN... AN ALIEN?

I...

YES. I AM.

THEN WHERE ARE YOU ***FROM?*** WHO ***SENT*** YOU? WHY ARE YOU ***HERE?***

I...CAN'T ANSWER THOSE QUESTIONS. NOT ***YET.***

THERE ISN'T MUCH *"YET"* ***LEFT,*** SUPERMAN! LUTHOR'S NOT GOING TO STOP UNTIL EVERYONE'S ***TERRIFIED*** OF YOU. GIVE ME ***SOMETHING!*** WHAT ***CAN*** YOU TELL ME?

THAT LUTHOR'S ***WRONG.*** IT ISN'T ***FEAR*** THAT DRIVES PEOPLE.

I KNOW. BUT PROVE ***THAT*** TO METROPOLIS.

I'M TRYING.

ROOF?

CAUGHT A RIDE TO WORK. JIMMY, ANYONE UPLOAD A STORY IN THE LAST TWENTY MINUTES ABOUT SUPERMAN BUSTING UP A *METH LAB?*

ROOFTOP

ENTRAN

NO. THOMPSON REPORTED SOMETHING ABOUT A *FLYING MOTOR YACHT,* BUT MR. WHITE'S HAVING HIM *BREATHALYZED.*

HEH, ROOKIE.

'LO, KENT.

LOIS.

From: [redacted]

Area 52: ...and your Pa nearly drove his TRACTOR through Jessup's Hardware when they started rallying Smallville folks to build "INVASION SHELTERS." The city folks aren't that crazy, are they?

Mildmannered: Takes more to spook them, but

www.dailyplanet.net/index.htm
DAILY PLANET
"SUPERMAN" INVESTIGATION BUILDS STEAM
LEXCORP CAMERAS PROVIDE MORE IMAGES
GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS DEFENSE OPTIONS
=SIGH.=
From: Clark.Kent@kent.com//ENCRYPTED
Mildmannered: Takes more to spook them, but not much. What we need to determine is where Luthor is getting his "evidence." Does it map with all OUR data?
Area 52: Yes and no. Luthor's photos--if that's what they are--are consistent in design with the images on the E-BOOK we found in your rocket. I've found no exact matches--
Area 52: --but he's definitely pulling information from somewhere other than his imagination.
Mildmannered: Ma, what if he's RIGHT? What if I AM supposed to be some sort of advance scout?
Mildmannered: Wherever I come from, there must have been SOME reason they sent me to Earth. We always assumed that they'd re-establish contact someday.
Area 52: Your Pa and I assumed. You, on the other hand, HOPED.
Mildmannered: Not really.
Area 52: Hush. It's all right. We know you love us, Clark, but it's only natural. Every adopted child is curious about his birth parents.

Area 52: For years, we were TERRIFIED they'd swoop down out of the skies and want to take you BACK. Your Pa and I used to debate what would happen then.

Area 52: We would never have given you up...but how could we have kept you from others like you when you grew up so lonely?

Area 52: Whatever Luthor knows, he's twisting it to his own ends. You are NOT HERE to do HARM, son.

OH, MY...

Mildmannered: Thank you.

Mildmannered: That green meteorite Luthor has is related to me somehow.

Mildmannered: Before Luthor left Smallville, he tried to build a machine that would probe its ORIGINS.

Mildmannered: My guess is that he finally completed it. He and I need to have a TALK.

CLARK, YOU GOT A SEC?

NOT NOW, JIM--

"--I HAVE TO SEE A MAN ABOUT A *ROCK.*"

LOIS?
I'M ON DEADLINE, JIMMY.
JIM.
WHAT?
IT'S *"JIM."* JIMMY'S A *KID'S* NAME. IT'S *"JIM."*
IS THAT WHAT *CLARK* CALLS YOU?
YEP.
THAT'S *ADORABLE.*
HEY, THOSE GRAPHICS LUTHOR'S BEEN PIPING TO THE MEDIA? HOW HARD WOULD THEY BE TO *FAKE?*
AT THAT RESOLUTION, WITH THAT DETAIL? IT'D BE LIKE COUNTERFEITING A TWENTY WITH A *CRAYON.*
PHOTO DEPARTMENT'S BEEN OVER THEM WITH A *MICROSCOPE,* AND THEY'RE SATISFIED.
THEN...
JIMMY, GET ME SOME *STAR CHARTS.*
"JIM."
ON IT.
*THANK*YEW.

ECHO PARK OBSERVATORY.

A DIVISION OF LEXCORP.

HOUR TWO: STILL NO ALIEN.

YOUR TAX DOLLARS AT *WORK.*

THAT'S US. GUMMINT-FUNDED BODYGUARDS FOR SOME RICH *CUEBALL.* GHUH.

DUDE, I'M NOT EVEN SURE I BELIEVE IN NO "SUPERMAN." MY GIRLFRIEND SAYS IT'S ALL PARTA SOME BIG *AD CAMPAIGN.*

SO WHAT'S THAT COMIN' IN AT *ELEVEN O'CLOCK?* A @$%#%$ *BILLBOARD?*

FIRE!

WHHUUH!

--AND YOU'LL SEE PROOF *THEN,* GENERAL. THE WHITE HOUSE WILL HAVE THEIR *OWN* MACHINES WITH WHICH TO MONITOR THE COMING ALIEN INCURSION BY TOMORROW *NOON.*

AT THIS POINT, IT'S SIMPLY A MATTER OF LEGALLY GIFTING THE LEXCORP-PATENTED WORMHOLE TECHNOLOGY TO THE GOVERNMENT. MY LAWYERS HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO MAKE IT *HAPPEN,* THOUGH, AND--

KHOOM

?

BREACH! IT'S *HIM!* HE'S COMING *FOR ME!*

AOOOGH! AOOOGH! AOOOGH!

MEN, SECURE THE *SITE!* LUTHOR MUST BE PROTECTED AT *ALL COSTS!* GO! *GO!*

!

YOU HAVE A *LOT* TO *ANSWER* FOR.

NO *WITNESSES?*

I WON'T RISK THEM *HURTING* THEMSELVES.

YOU, I HAVE LESS *PATIENCE* WITH. WHAT IS THIS ALL *ABOUT,* LUTHOR?

YOU MEAN *PROJECT: KRYPTON?*

"KRYPTON." WHAT IS *THAT?* SOME NEW *WEAPON* OF YOURS?

YOU...

...YOU REALLY DON'T *KNOW...!*

BWAH HA HA HA HA HA HA!

OH! *OH!* THIS IS JUST THE *BEST DAY EVER!*

WHAT'S SO *FUNNY?*

OH, MY *SIDES...*

KRYPTON. A *PLANET?* ANDROMEDA GALAXY? ORBITING A *CLASS M3 RED STAR?* HELLO?

IT'S YOUR *BIRTHWORLD,* SUPERMAN.

NO. DON'T TRY FOR THE *POKER FACE.* THAT WON'T FLY. THIS IS ALL A *MAGNIFICENT REVELATION* TO YOU...WHICH *MEANS...*

HEH! SNRFF!

OH, I REALLY SHOULDN'T ADMIT THIS. SO FAR, IT'S BEEN MY *SECRET,* BUT...

FORGIVE ME, I CAN*NOT* RESIST. HOLD ON. I NEED MY CELLPHONE CAMERA FOR THIS.

READY? OKAY. YOUR HOMEWORLD... YOUR RACE...YOUR *PARENTS...?*

ALL DEAD.

GONE.

SCATTERED TO THE *CELESTIAL WINDS.*

AS FAR AS THE UNIVERSE IS CONCERNED, SUPERMAN...YOU ARE COMPLETELY AND UTTERLY *ALONE.*

CHEESE.

KLIK

LISTEN TO MY PULSE. I'M TELLING THE TRUTH.

BUT DON'T GO SPREADING IT ***AROUND,*** ALL RIGHT? YOU'LL SPOIL MY LITTLE ***"LOOK, HE'S AN INVADER!"*** SCAM. OH, WAIT. THAT'S RIGHT. YOU HAVEN'T ONE ***WHIT*** OF CREDIBILITY...

NOT AGAINST THE PHOTOS I'VE TAKEN. KRYPTONIAN WARSHIPS AND SUCH? GENUINE.

TKK

CAPTURED RANDOMLY THROUGH A QUANTUM APERTURE IN SPACETIME, LIKE THESE.

SPACE***TIME.*** THESE ***ARE*** IMAGES FROM VARIOUS POINTS IN THE ***PAST.***

THAT ***EXPLOSION,*** I'D SAY ABOUT ***TWENTY-FIVE YEARS.***

I'M STILL FINE-TUNING THE ***AUDIO,*** BUT YOU'D BE ***STUNNED*** BY HOW MUCH KRYPTONIAN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY I'VE ALREADY GLEANED ***DESPITE*** THE CRUDITY OF THE ***TRANSLATION.***

ESTABLISHED A SELF-REPLENISHING ***MOONBASE***

ONE VACCINATION FOR ALL DISEASES

ELEMENTAL ***TRANSMUTATION VIRUS***

EXPERIMENTAL PHASE-SHIFTING INTO THE ***"PHANTOM ZONE"***

KRYPTON.

IT'S NOT ***CABLE TELEVISION.*** THERE'S NO WAY YET TO ZERO IN THROUGH THE JUMBLE ON SPECIFIC TIMES AND PLACES, BUT IT'S COMING. MY ATTENTION'S BEEN DIVIDED.

I FIND YOU DISTRACTING.

THIS IS ONLY A DISPLAY. WHERE'S THE ACTUAL ***RECEIVER,*** LUTHOR?

OR WOULD YOU PREFER I ***SEARCH*** BY TEARING THIS INSTALLATION APART BRICK BY ***BRICK?***

I WOULDN'T IF I--

=GHKK=

CAREFUL... ***WINDPIPE...***

BETTER. =KOFF= AS I WAS SAYING...

THAT ***CRIPPLING AGONY*** YOU FELT WHEN YOU TRIED TO SAVE THE ***BRIDGE?*** MY DOING. TRY TO CONTAIN YOUR ***SHOCK.***

WHEN KRYPTON WENT ***BOOM,*** THE BLAST IRRADIATED ITS FRAGMENTS INTO SOMETHING SO FAR UP THE ***PERIODIC TABLE*** THERE'S NO ATOMIC ***NUMBER*** FOR IT. I ***OWN*** A PIECE. IT'S HARMLESS...TO ***EARTHLINGS.***

I CALL IT ***"KRYPTONITE."*** YOU'D CALL IT *"AGONIZING GREEN DEATH BY RADIATION POISONING."* AND IT COULD BE HIDDEN ***ANYWHERE*** ON THE PREMISES. THAT'S ONE REASON YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO GO ON A ***TEAR.***

HERE'S ANOTHER.

AS OF TWENTY MINUTES AGO, THIS ENTIRE OUTPOST BECAME PROPERTY OF THE ***UNITED STATES MILITARY.*** EXHIBIT A: THE DEED.

INSERT MUSICAL STING ***HERE.***

YOU'D NEVER HAND THESE SECRETS TO THE GOVERNMENT. YOU WOULDN'T TIP YOUR *HAND.*

POINT. BUT I *WOULD* BILK THEM FOR *BILLIONS.* IT WOULDN'T BE THE FIRST TIME.

IS THAT WHY YOU *INVENTED* A *HOAX* THAT'S CAUSING *WORLDWIDE PANIC?* TO LINE YOUR *POCKETS?*

NO. TO DISCREDIT AND DESTROY *YOU.*

THE *MONEY'S* JUST A *PERK,* YOU *FREAK.*

UNDERSTAND. I'VE SPENT MY *ENTIRE LIFE* SEARCHING FOR A CIVILIZATION FURTHER UP THE EVOLUTIONARY LADDER THAN THE KNUCKLE-DRAGGERS I WAS UNFORTUNATE ENOUGH TO BE *BORN* AMONG.

WELL, YOU FINALLY SHOWED *UP.* AND GIVEN YOUR *FIRST CHANCE...*

"...YOU DELIBERATELY *HUMILIATED* ME.

"YOU LOOKED AT *ME* LIKE *I* LOOK AT THE *ANTS.*"

YOU DON'T GET TO DO THAT.

PERIOD.

YOU'RE CRAZY.

AU CONTRAIRE. I'M THE ONLY SANE INMATE OF *ASYLUM EARTH.* I'M NOT EAGER TO HAND TOMORROW OVER TO AN *INTERPLANETARY EXTREMIST* WITH *LASER EYES.*

THERE'S ONLY ROOM ON THIS WORLD FOR *ONE LEADER,* SUPERMAN. WHEN I'M FINISHED WITH YOU, EVERY LAST GIBBON *OUT* THERE WILL KNOW YOU FOR THE MENACE YOU *ARE...*

...AND THEY'LL REALIZE THAT *LEX LUTHOR* IS THEIR SAVIOR.

YOU'LL NEVER GET PEOPLE TO BELIEVE THAT. I'LL WIN THEM OVER ONE AT A TIME IF I HAVE TO.

SEE, YOU LOSE RIGHT *THERE,* BECAUSE I PREFER TO THINK IN MUCH *LARGER* NUMBERS. I--

GENERAL, WE'RE IN! *WE* HAVE THE ALIEN IN OUR *SIGHTS!*

NOT FOR *LONG,* I'D IMAGINE.

TA.

"All the news you need to know."

The Metropolis Eagle

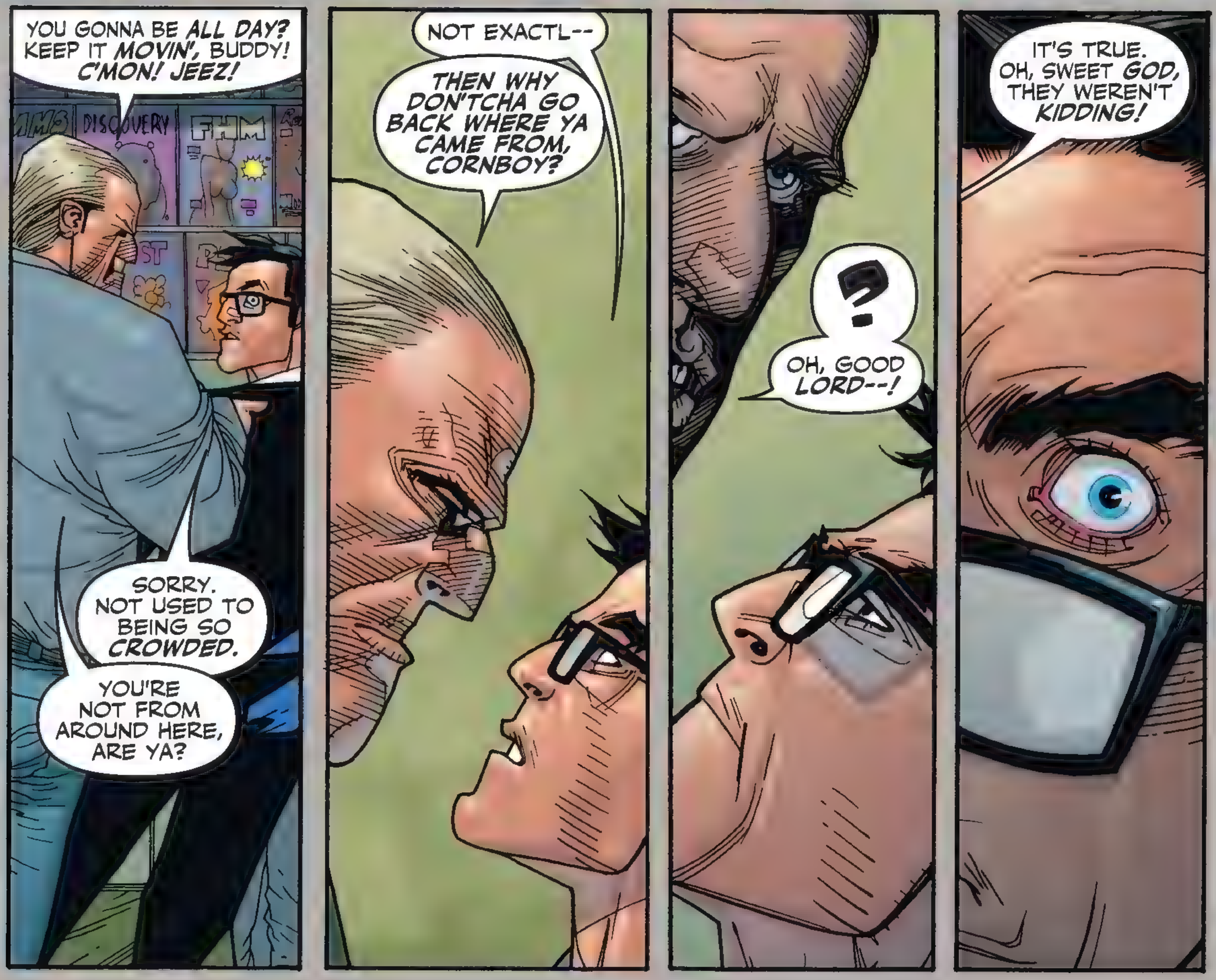
Late Edition

VOL CLVII METROPOLIS, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2004 ONE DOLLAR

SUPERMAN ATTACKS; ARMY SAVES LUTHOR

Scientist Claims Assault Final Proof of "Kryptonian Invasion"

LATEST POLLS: MAJORITY OF METROPOLITANS FEAR "MAN OF STEEL"



THE KRYPTONIANS!

THEY'RE HERE!

LADY, MOVE!

OUTTA MY WAY!

AAAAAH!

IS YOUR PHONE SERVICE OUTDATED? SIGN UP FOR MetroCELL TODAY!

FI

T

SCION
CISCO

OH, GOD, LOOK OUT -- !

RUN.

SUPERMAN, DON'T HURT US -- !

RUN.

?

HEADQUARTERS, THIS IS UNIT SIX! INVADER IS TARGETED!

DAMN IT, I'M *NOT THE ENEMY!*

I'M ON *YOUR SIDE!*

CHIEF, IT'S *JIM OLSEN!* I'M AT 52ND AND--

LOIS? LOIS, PUT *MR. WHITE* ON! I'VE GOT AN *EXCLUSIVE!*

I *HEAR* YOU, JIMMY! TYPING IT *UP!* KEEP *TALKING*...

LOIS, GIVE ME MY PHONE.

GOT A STRINGER SAYS THERE'S ANOTHER SPACECRAFT AT *METRO TOWER*--

--UNCONFIRMED REPORT OF ALIEN SOLDIERS SWARMING THE *STADIUM*--

NOBODY'S SURE *WHAT* THE HELL'S GOING ON!

YES OR *NO* ON A *FOURTH AVENUE ARMADA?* I'M GETTING *CONFLICTING INFO* HERE--!

WAIT. WHAT DO YOU *MEAN* A WARCRAFT *"SUDDENLY APPEARED"* IN MIDTOWN?

PHONE. NOW.

HOW DOES SOMETHING THAT SIZE *"SUDDENLY APPEAR"* IN OUR AIRSPACE WITHOUT *NORAD* FLIPPING OUT?

E-MAIL ME A *SNAPSHOT!* NO, DON'T TAKE TIME TO DOWNLOAD FROM YOUR *CAMERA,* JUST SEND A *PHONEPIC* SO I CAN *SEE!*

FOR THE LAST TIME, LANE, *GIVE ME MY PH--*

GREAT CAESAR'S GHOST.

JIMMY, TELL ME I'M GETTING A *CLEAR IMAGE,* BECAUSE FROM WHAT I CAN *TELL--*

"--OUR ALLEGED *'INVADER'* SEEMS TO BE *DEFENDING* US FROM THAT THING!"

YOU HEARD ME, MS. STOKES. EVACUATE THE LEXCORP BUILDING *IMMEDIATELY.* I WON'T HAVE ANY OF MY EMPLOYEES *ENDANGERED.*

BUT, MR. LUTHOR, SIR, WHAT ABOUT *YOU?*

I HAVE A PLAN TO SAVE METROPOLIS FROM THE *KRYPTONIANS,* MS. STOKES, BUT *I MUST NOT BE DISTRACTED. NO ADMITTANCE* TO THIS OFFICE. *NONE.*

NOW, GO HOME TO YOUR HUSBAND AND CHILDREN BEFORE THE KRYPTONIANS HAVE REDUCED THIS CITY TO *ASHES.*

WHAT A PRODUCTIVE WEEK. SLANDER? CHECK. PANIC IN THE STREETS? *CHECK.* WHAT'S NEXT? LET ME THINK, LET ME *THINK...*

AH, YES.

ACTIVATE [illegible]

NNNNGHH--!

ARE YOU GETTING THIS, LOIS?

NO, I'M AS CONFUSED AS *YOU!* ONE MINUTE, SUPERMAN'S KICKING *BUTT*--

--THE NEXT, HE'S ACTING LIKE THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE SKY *ABOVE* HIM, BUT I HAVE *NO IDEA* WHAT HE'S *REACTING* TO--

"--NOT UNLESS HE'S SEEING SOMETHING I *CAN'T!*"

BAM!

AWK!

GHUUUH!

--POLICE ARE DOING OUR BEST TO *PROTECT* METROPOLIS, BUT WE NEED EVERYONE HEARING THIS BROADCAST TO STAY *OFF THE STREETS!* THE NATIONAL GUARD HAS BEEN *ALERTED*--

OVER THERE! LOOK!

HOLY--! NOW THEY'RE FALLING OUTTA THE *AIR!*

ARUNE, CALL FOR *BACKUP!* ALL REPORTERS STAY *BACK!*

LIKE *HELL!*

MP

WHOEVER YOU ARE, COME OUT WITH YOUR *HANDS UP!*

STOP...

...PUT DOWN YOUR *WEAPONS...*

SUPERMAN! HE'S DOWN!

FIRE! *FIRE!*

AAAAH!

NO...YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND...!

FREEZE! PUT YOUR HANDS WHERE WE CAN SEE THEM!

DO IT!

HE'S FLEEING AROUND THE CORNER! AFTER HIM!

SGT. RICHIE, THIS WAY! HE'S RUNNING DOWN A *BLIND ALLEY!*

RUNNING? WHY AIN'T HE *FLYIN'*?

...

NICE *GOING,* COSBY. I THINK HE *HEARD* YOU.

THIS IS *UNIT TWELVE.* SUBJECT HAS *DISAPPEARED.* REPEAT--SUBJECT HAS *DISAPPEARED.*

KENT? I DIDN'T SEE YOU THERE. WHITE'S GOT YOU CHASING THIS STORY, HUH?

YOU'RE GONNA RUN WITH THE BIG DOGS, YOU NEED TO GET IN BETTER *SHAPE.* YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE ABOUT TO *PASS OUT.*

TOYBOT

SALE

THE DAILY PLANET NEWSROOM.

CHANNEL SIX SHOWS 'EM OVER *HOB'S BAY!*

YOU *SURE?* NELSON'S THERE RIGHT NOW, SEES *ZIP!*

CAN ANYONE VERIFY THAT THEY'VE REACHED *NORTHPARK?* I'M GETTING *CONFLICTING INFO!*

NOBODY KNOWS *ANYTHING* FOR *SURE,* MR. WHITE--!

AND WHOSE FAULT IS THAT?

IF THE *TV STATIONS* CAN'T GET THEIR STORIES STRAIGHT, THAT'S A *CRYING SHAME--*

--BUT THAT IS *EXACTLY* WHY THE PEOPLE OF THIS CITY LOOK TO THE *DAILY PLANET* FOR THE TRUTH!

SO GO FIND IT!

KENT? WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN?

SORRY, MR. WHITE. I--

"SORRY" DOESN'T *CUT* IT! IF YOU DON'T WALK IN WITH A *STORY,* THEN YOU DON'T GET TO COME AND GO AT YOUR *LEISURE!*

DO YOU THINK YOU'RE SOMEBODY *SPECIAL,* KENT?

NOT RIGHT NOW, SIR.

DAMN *STRAIGHT.* BECAUSE STARTING *TOMORROW,* YOU'RE ON A *TIME CLOCK--*

--ASSUMING METROPOLIS HAS ANY TIME *LEFT!*

WHITE! THE PORT AUTHORITY JUST CLOSED ALL BRIDGES AND TUNNELS!

GET ONE OF YOUR LITTLE TYPISTS HERE TO FIND OUT IF THE POWER PLANT IS STILL ONLINE!

WMET JUST REPORTED IT VAPORIZED, BUT THAT WOULD HAVE BLACKED US OUT!

YOU SAY THAT WITH CONFIDENCE.

I SAY IT BECAUSE I OWN THE DAMN THING!

MR. WHITE, I HAVE THE MAYOR'S OFFICE CALLING! THEY WANT A SOLID ANSWER ON HOW MANY KRYPTONIANS THERE ARE...?

I'LL TAKE IT, JEANINE.

GLADLY.

WHITE, I'M NOT FINISHED WITH YOU--!

AND YOU. THROW UP ON THAT KEYBOARD AND IT COMES OUT OF YOUR CHECK. GOT IT?

YES SIR, MR. GALLOWAY.

DON'T JUST SIT THERE, MAN! I WANT A...A...

I WANT A PIECE ON HOW LEXCORP IS COPING WITH THIS CRISIS.

LEXCORP'S A MAJOR ADVERTISER, AND THEY LIKE TO SEE THEIR NAME ONLINE! THAT MEANS THAT IF LEX LUTHOR WANTS HIS BUTT KISSED AND I SAY DO IT, YOU PUCKER UP!

BUT--

THAT'S NOT ACTUALLY NEWS, SIR.

AS YOUR PUBLISHER, NEWS IS WHAT I SAY IT IS!

IF I WANT YOU TO TALK, I'LL PULL YOUR STRING. SO LONG AS YOU WORK HERE, YOU WILL KEEP YOURSELF CORKED. IS THAT CLEAR?

YEAH.

From: HYPERLINK "mailto:Martha.Kent@kent.com //ENCRYPTED" Martha.Kent@kent.com //ENCRYPTED

Area52: Son, are you there? Your pa and I heard what's happening in Metropolis and we're worried. Are you all right?

MildMannered: No.

SUPER-SPY

MildMannered: I'm sick. Lex has found a way to broadcast meteor radiation like a web across the city, and it's draining me. Literally.

MildMannered: It's a little better indoors, but it's getting gradually more painful regardless.

Area52: Then come home. Let the army deal with the aliens.

MildMannered: They're not aliens, Ma. All this is Luthor's doing, somehow. Every bit of it. All to take away any ability I might have to help anyone. And it worked.

MildMannered: He's won. The city is his. Any second now, he'll swoop in to the "rescue" just to seal the deal-- and all I can do is WATCH.

Area52: Son, this is your father. COME HOME while you still CAN.

Area52: If Luthor really is behind this, he'll call it off long before he levels the city. If he just wants to be the "hero" instead of YOU, then LET him. Don't put yourself THROUGH this.

Dear Mr. White
To save you the trouble of terminating me, I am resigning the Planet effective immediately. You will not see me again. By the time you read this, I'll be

MildMannered: We thought a "secret identity" would be a good idea.

Area52: It didn't work out like we'd hoped. There's NO SHAME in that. You've done a lot of GOOD, son, but you have to PICK YOUR BATTLES. Clark, COME HOME. It's OKAY.

WHOA! HOLD ON! WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE--

?

ARE YOU LEAVING? GET BACK TO YOUR DESK AND WRITE!

I--

WHAT? YOU'RE SCARED? WE ALL ARE, CLARK! BUT WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO THE PUBLIC! PEOPLE ARE COUNTING ON US!

I CAN'T DO ANYTHING FOR THEM.

YOU SPINELESS WORM. AND TO THINK I STOOD UP FOR YOU!

I KNOW.

--TURN THE SCREENS TO *TV FEED! NOW!* HE'S CORNERED A *WGBS CAMERAMAN!*

WHO? SUPERMAN?

WORSE.

CATTLE OF EARTH, I AM **COMMANDER VAN-GAR** OF THE PLANET **KRYPTON.** EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY, YOU ANSWER TO A **NEW GOVERNMENT:**

ME.

NOW THAT OUR **ADVANCE SCOUT** HAS CHARTED A PATH FOR US...AN ACT OF **SUPREME LOYALTY** TO HIS RACE FOR WHICH WE ARE **GRATEFUL...**

...THE INTERSTELLAR ARMY OF KRYPTON CLAIMS THIS WORLD AS ITS **OWN.**

IN ONE SHORT **AFTERNOON,** MY TROOPS HAVE CAPTURED THE BEACHHEAD YOU CALL **METROPOLIS.**

IMAGINE WHAT WE CAN ACCOMPLISH BY THE TIME THIS MUDBALL ORBITS ITS **SUN** SEVEN MORE TIMES.

WE COMMAND UNIMAGINABLE POWER. WE POSSESS SUPERIOR **WEAPONS.** WE ARE **KRYPTONIANS.**

WE ARE **INVINCIBLE.**

ELVIS

THERE IS **NO ONE** WHO MAY **CHALLENGE** US.

AS OF NOW, WE PLACE OUR BRAND **UPON** YOU. KNOW IT.

IT IS THE SYMBOL BY WHICH KRYPTON SHALL BE **FOREVER REMEMBERED** BY THE HUMAN RACE.

LIKE HELL.

METRO MAIL

--BIRRRRRRRRRRRRRR--

--BIRR
NNNGH!

HELP!
H-KOFF-

HELLLLP
ME!

-KAFF-
-KAFF-

HELP!

PRIDE

PRRIDEFC

YOU'RE SAFE NOW, MISS.

YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND--

--YOU *DISGUST* ME.

!

N-NO ONE'S SAFE! THEY'RE EVERYWHERE!

LOOK!

SUPERMAN, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

DON'T LEAVE ME!

SUPERMAN!

GOD...

...THIS HAS LUTHOR'S TENTACLE-PRINTS ALL *OVER* IT...

KEEP THINKING, LOIS. THINK OUT LOUD IF IT HELPS. THE KRYPTONIANS APPEARED ***INSTANTLY,*** WITH ***ZERO WARNING,*** IN SHIPS THAT ***COMPLETELY*** ESCAPED DETECTION.

NOW WE'RE GETTING STORIES OF SIGHTINGS THAT DON'T MATCH UP, REPORTS OF DAMAGE THAT DOESN'T ***EXIST...***

SUPERMAN, WHEREVER YOU ARE, IF YOU'RE LISTENING... I KNOW THIS ISN'T WHAT IT ***LOOKS*** LIKE. IF YOU CAN ***HEAR*** ME... LET ME ***HELP.***

...

OKAY.

MY GOD, WHAT DID THEY *DO* TO YOU?

JUST NEED... A SECOND *WIND.* AND THERE...

...THERE *IS* NO *"THEY."* AT LEAST, NOT IN THE...

...THE NUMBERS LUTHOR WANTS US TO *BELIEVE.*

THIS ENTIRE *"INVASION"* IS A MOSTLY A *HOAX.* IT'S DESIGNED TO CREATE A *FEAR* AND A *PANIC* THAT LUTHOR CAN *"SAVE"* US FROM--AND *"PROVE"* THAT I'M NEVER TO BE *TRUSTED.*

WE *SAW* YOU *FIGHT.* THOSE *ARE* REAL *SOLDIERS.*

*SOME...*IF BY *'REAL,'* YOU MEAN THUGS AND MERCENARIES EQUIPPED BY *LUTHOR.* ARMED WITH ALIEN-MODELED WEAPONS AND SPEECH TRANSLATORS, THEY ACCOUNT FOR MAYBE *TEN PERCENT* OF THE *'INVADERS.'*

THE REST OF THE FORCE IS AN *ILLUSION* CAST BY AN *ENERGY WEB* LUTHOR'S THROWN OVER THE CITY. I THOUGHT AT FIRST IT WAS INTENDED TO POISON ME, BUT I REALIZE NOW THAT'S A *SECONDARY* BENEFIT.

LEX ISN'T CRAZY ENOUGH TO *BANKRUPT* HIMSELF BUILDING A KRYPTONIAN *ARMY,* LOIS--

--NOT WHEN HE CAN GATHER PHANTOM IMAGES FROM ANOTHER WORLD'S *PAST* AND *BROADCAST* THEM LIKE *HOLOGRAMS.*

HOW DID YOU--?

LATER. FIRST, TELL ME MORE ABOUT THIS *"POISON."* WHAT ON EARTH COULD HURT *YOU?*

NOTHING *ON* EARTH. IT'S TOO DANGEROUS A SECRET, LOIS. I CAN'T--I SHOULDN'T--

EXPLAIN, *DON'T* EXPLAIN. DO WHATEVER YOU THINK IS BEST.

I TRUST YOU.

...

WOW.

LUTHOR CALLS IT ***KRYPTONITE.*** IT'S A METEORITE FROM MY ***HOMEWORLD,*** AND IT GIVES OFF A UNIQUE RADIATION THAT AFFECTS ONLY ***ME.***

THAT'S WHAT'S POWERING THIS ENTIRE ***OPERATION.*** A CHUNK OF ***ROCK*** NO BIGGER THAN A ***FOOTBALL***-- AND I CAN'T GET WITHIN A ***CITY BLOCK*** OF IT.

UH-HUH.

AND IT'S LOCKED AWAY ***WHERE?***

IN HIS ***LAB*** ON THE ***TOP FLOOR.*** THERE'S A PRIVATE ***ELEVATOR*** THROUGH AN UNMARKED ***DOOR*** OFF THE NORTH ***ALLEY.***

IT'S ***OPEN.***

[illegible]

OH, NO...

YOU HEARD SOMETHING. WAIT! YOU'RE IN NO SHAPE TO--

NO CHOICE. BE CAREFUL.

YOU, TOO...

TARA!

NO! GIVE HER BACK!

WHY? WHY ARE YOU *DOING* THIS?

FOR YOUR OWN GOOD. I WOULDN'T EXPECT YOU TO UNDERSTAND.

NOT IN THE SHORT TIME YOU HAVE LEFT.

KILL THEM.

DID...DID YOU *SEE* THAT?

IS HE--?

N...

...NO...

PEOPLE, *LISTEN* TO ME! YOU'RE BEING *LIED TO!*

TELL THEM THE *TRUTH, "VAN-GAR"--* OR *WHATEVER* YOUR NAME IS! YOUR MEN ARE *ACTORS* WORKING FOR *LUTHOR!*

YOU'RE AN *EMPTY THREAT!* METROPOLIS CAN-- AND *WILL--*

--*FIGHT BACK!*

REALLY?

THAP

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S BROUGHT ON THIS SUDDEN BOUT OF *INSUBORDINATION,* SOLDIER--

NNGGH!

--BUT WHY DON'T YOU *ASK* THESE DELICATE LITTLE *SPARROWS* YOU SAY WILL "FIGHT" US--

--HOW "EMPTY" DOES THIS THREAT LOOK?

"ACTORS." ACTORS ARE PAID FRAUDS, "SUPERMAN."

LET THIS RING IN YOUR SUPER-EARS. MY MEN AREN'T DOING THIS FOR THE MONEY.

WE'RE BACKING LUTHOR BECAUSE HE'S RIGHT. YOU'RE THE FRAUD--

AAAGGHH!

--AND WE'RE ON TO YOU.

IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF *TIME* BEFORE YOU *TURN* ON ANYONE *WEAKER* THAN YOU. THAT'S HOW IT *WORKS.*

NOT...

...NOT ALWAYS.

WHAT, WERE YOU RAISED IN A *BARN?*

SAKU

OH, GOD...THAT *KID*...

SUPERMAAAAAN!

FRONT *PAGE*... FRONT *PAGE*...

HELLO, *CHIEF?* I'M UPLOADING A SHOT *NOW* YOU GOTTA *SEE!*

NO, I STILL HAVEN'T MADE UP MY MIND WHOSE SIDE SUPERMAN'S ON, BUT THAT'S ABOUT TO BE A QUESTION FOR THE *WHOLE WORLD--*

--BECAUSE AS SOON AS WE GET THIS PHOTO *ONLINE,* I *GUARANTEE* YOU, WITHIN *TWO MINUTES--*

"--IT'S GONNA BE PICKED UP BY EVERY NEWS SERVER THERE *IS!*"

DAMN IT!

MR. LUTHOR, SIR! REQUEST PERMISSION TO DEPLOY TROOPS, SIR!

LEXCORP'S *EARTH-FIRST SECURITY FORCE* IS FULLY ARMED, READY AND *EAGER* TO ENGAGE THE INVADERS, *SIR!*

ANY MOMENT NOW, GENERAL. THIS CITY IS COUNTING ON YOU TO *ERADICATE* THIS ALIEN *BLIGHT*. STAND AT THE *READY*.

I SAID *HOLD*, GENERAL.

DEET

BUT, SIR, THE *CIVILIANS*--

COMMANDER, I'M GRANTING YOU AN EXTRA SIXTY SECONDS.

TELL ME THAT GIVES YOU ENOUGH TIME TO BREAK SUPERMAN'S SPINE.

WITH PLEASURE.

YOW.

EVERYONE OFF THE STREETS! NOW!

FOR GOD'S SAKE, GET YOURSELF TO SAFETY!

NO ONE'S LISTENING.

DO YOU KNOW *WHY?*

BECAUSE YOU'RE SO UTTERLY *PREDICTABLE.*

=HNNGH!=

CAN'T-- HOLD IT-- *LONG!* PEOPLE, *GO!*

G--=

I'VE BEEN WAITING ALL DAY TO SAY THIS, SUPERMAN:

YOUR "S" IS *MINE.*

SPAWNG

?

BACK OFF.

HE'S WITH *US.*

THIRTY SECONDS AND COUNTING, GENERAL. ON MY *MARK...*

"IN LEX'S LAB," HE SAID. "IT'S POWERING THIS ENTIRE OPERATION."

YOU'D THINK LUTHOR WOULD HAVE THE COURTESY TO ***LABEL*** HIS DEATH MACHINES...

OKAY... TRY ***THIS...***

THAT'S IT. THAT'S THE ***METEORITE.*** SUPERMAN, IF YOU CAN ***HEAR*** ME, I'VE GOT IT.

WE'VE ***WON.***

MY SOLDIERS...!

SMOKE AND *MIRRORS,* VAN-GAR. SUPERMAN WAS *RIGHT.*

YOU GUYS WEREN'T *HALF* THE THREAT YOU *PRETENDED* TO BE. WE DID A *LOT* OF THIS TO *OURSELVES.* BUT WE'RE NOT *AFRAID* ANYMORE.

GET HIM.

DON'T BOTHER.

OH, JEEZ...! THE *TANK*--THAT'S FOR *REAL!* TAKE COVER.

JIMMY?

RELAX.

LEXCORP.

LOIS LANE. YOU NOSY LITTLE *TWIT.* HOW MUCH DO YOU *KNOW?*

THE SAME AS *=UNNFF=*

SAME AS *EVERYONE* WILL, LUTHOR, WHEN I REPORT THE *STORY*-- THAT YOU'RE *TWICE* THE LIAR EVEN *I* FIGURED YOU WERE!

ALL YOUR *"WARNING PHOTOS"* OF KRYPTONIAN *WARSHIPS* ROCKETING THEIR WAY *"TOWARDS"* US? *BOGUS.*

=HNNFF!= THE *SPACECRAFT* ARE *GENUINE,* BUT WHAT EVERYONE *OVERLOOKED*--UNTIL I HAD THEIR *BACKGROUNDS* COMPARED TO *MODERN STARCHARTS*--WAS THAT THOSE IMAGES ARE LITERALLY *THOUSANDS OF YEARS OLD!*

I *ALSO* KNOW THAT BY YANKING THAT *ROCK* OUT OF YOUR *POWER GRID,* I JUST PROVED THAT NINE-TENTHS OF THIS *"INVASION FORCE"* IS A *BROADCAST ILLUSION--*

--AND THAT *SUPERMAN* IS KICKING THE *TEETH* OUT OF WHATEVER'S *LEFT!*

WISHFUL *THINKING.* *"KRYPTONIANS"* ASIDE, I *ASSURE* YOU, THE *LEXCORP ARMY* AMASSED *DOWNSTAIRS* IS 100% *AUTHENTIC.* ONCE *THEY'VE* BEEN DISPATCHED, SUPERMAN WILL BE--

?

BOOM!!!

MR. LUTHOR, SIR! WE HAVE A PROBLEM!

THEN SOLVE IT! I'M PAYING YOU TO VALIDATE THE LUTHOR NAME! GET OUT THERE NOW NOW NOW!

THAT'S JUST IT, SIR! WE CAN'T! THE ONLY EXIT IS THE BAY DOOR, AND IT'S JAMMED SHUT--

"--LIKE SOMETHING HUGE FELL AGAINST IT FROM OUTSIDE!"

WELL, KEEP TRYING! KEEP--

LANE! GET AWAY FROM THERE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

MONKEY-WRENCHING YOUR EQUIPMENT, YOU CREEP.

OOK, OOK.

KRAA AA

DON'T JUST *STAND* THERE! *OPEN FIRE!*

FINE! I'LL PUT THIS DOG DOWN *MYSELF!*

APPARENTLY. LOOKS LIKE YOUR *BOSS* HAS CUT YOU *LOOSE.*

IMPOSSIBLE! HE--

--WOULD HANG YOU OUT TO DRY IN A *METROPOLIS SECOND,* "VAN-GAR"-- OR *WHATEVER* YOUR NAME IS!

YOU DON'T KNOW THE REAL LEX LUTHOR.

NOT LIKE *I* DO.

OUCH. I TAKE IT YOU'RE BACK IN THE *GAME...?*

GETTING THERE.

GOOD. WHICH, BY THE BY, IS NOT TO SAY YOU DON'T STILL FREAK ME OUT A LITTLE, BUT... WELL...

...HERE.

I BELIEVE THIS IS *YOURS.*

LUTHOR?

LUTHOR.

THEY'LL KNOW.

SUPERMAN'S OWN *PEOPLE* WILL TELL ME HOW TO STOP HIM!

=NNGH!=

COMMUNICATION IS A *TWO-WAY STREET,* LANE. USING A *WORMHOLE* TO SCAN KRYPTON'S PAST WAS *ALWAYS* ONLY THE FIRST STEP.

THE *TRUE* GOAL WAS TO *TRANSMIT* AS WELL AS *RECEIVE.* TO ESTABLISH A *DIALOGUE.* IT WILL *GREATLY* ACCELERATE THE HALF-LIFE OF THE *FUEL,* BUT SO *BE* IT. I'LL FIND *MORE.*

FINE. YOU KNOW...=KOFF= WHO *ELSE* IS...GOING TO TALK? YOUR FAKE *KRYPTONIANS.*

THEY'LL... ROLL OVER ON YOU NOW THAT...THEY'RE *EXPOSED...*

AS IF I HADN'T PLANNED FOR *THAT* CONTINGENCY. HERE'S A LITTLE FACTOID FOR YOUR *SCIENCE EDITOR:*

deet

WHEN PROPERLY *ENGINEERED,* EVEN THE *TINIEST* SLIVER OF KRYPTONITE IS ENOUGH TO MAKE A FORMIDABLE *EXPLOSIVE.*

OH, GOD! YOU *LUNATIC!* *SUIC=GKK=*

...*SUICIDE* BOMBERS...?

WELL, TECHNICALLY, NOT "*SUICIDE,*" SINCE I SORT OF LEFT THAT PART OUT OF THE *HIRING* BRIEF. STILL...

AS THEY *ERUPT* ALL OVER THE *CITY,* WITH ANY *LUCK,* SUPERMAN WILL BE ONE OF THE *THOUSANDS* CAUGHT IN THE *BLASTS.* IF *NOT,* WELL...

...AT LEAST THE *COLLATERAL DAMAGE* WILL KEEP HIM TOO BUSY TO HELP *YOU.*

AAAAAAAAH!

HOLY--!

NOOOOO!

IT'S TRYING TO DETONATE! GET IT OFF ME GET IT OFF--!

d-KZZT-eet de-KZZT

I DON'T WANT TO DIE!

STOP WHINING.

DEAR GOD, PLEASE...!

WHY WOULD HE SHOW YOU MERCY, VAN-GAR? HOW MANY TIMES DID HE HEAR THAT PRAYER TODAY *BECAUSE* OF YOU?

BYSTANDERS *MURDERED*, CITY BLOCKS *FLATTENED*... YOU'RE LUCKY I DON'T JUST LET YOU *DROP*. QUIT--

AAAH!

deetdeetdeetdeet

--QUIT *SQUIRMING!*

KRYPTONITE-- *BURNS*--

--ALMOST-- *HAVE IT*--

dèeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee

BOOM!

HI.

COME IN! *COME IN!* THIS IS *LEX LUTHOR* FROM THE PLANET *EARTH!* MY WORLD IS IN *DIRE PERIL!*

SKY-SKIMM-◊8 ıll-VER THE *FIRE FALd⊗*

CO◊⊙-CTED FOR ACTS OF SEDIT-ıll-◊ AGAINST &◊ ll◊-TON'S GOVERN◊◊¡◊T

SUCH ‼ a ıll-⊙ELY DAUG◊¡T◊R, ALLURA! SHE'S

MOMMY, -⊗ THAT A M‼N'S *VOICE--?*

I NEED YOUR HELP! FOR THE LOVE OF *GOD, CAN YOU HEAR ME?*

I THINK HE JUST WANTS SOMEONE TO TALK TO.

TIME IS CRUCIAL! I REQUIRE WEAPONS-- FIREARMS--

AAAGH!

LUTHOR, STOP GRASPING AT STRAWS!

IT'S--

=NNNHHH!=

--IT'S OVER!

TRUE.

THEY'RE SIMPLE 8Q!!!-!◊□IQUAKES, NOTH-◊8 TO WORRY

WOULD ⌖-◊!Q MY INSTRUMENTS ARE Q!8-⌖T!Q-◊8 A CRY FROM !◊OTHER GALAXY

ENSURE UNIVE⍜!d PEACE FOR ALL FUTURE GENER!!TIONS

⍀LEBRATE OUR GREATE⍜T ⟒!!⍜⍜ OF LITERATURE

IMAGINING THINGS AGAIN, LORD THAN-OL!

NO, PIR-⍜!!-⍜! FAINT IMAGES ON OUR SCANNERS-- FADING IN AND OUT...*ARE* THEY *ILLUSIONS*, OR...?

NO! I AM REAL! TAKE HEED!

WE CAN SAVE EACH OTHER!

PULL THE PLUG, LUTHOR! YOU

=NNGH=

YOU *LOST*! ASK *LOIS*!

"ASK *VAN-GAR!*

"ASK *EVERYONE* WHO READS TOMORROW'S *NEWS* WHO *STARTED* THIS NIGHTMARE--"

--AND WHO *STOPPED* IT!

...ITIZENS OF THE *SCIENCE COUNCIL*-- *KRYPTON IS DOOMED!*

HOPELESS.

...WOULDN'T *LISTEN* TO ME, LARA. IT'S *HOPELESS.*

I KNOW, JOR-EL. BUT KEEP FAITH IN WHAT WE *HAVE* ACCOMPLISHED... FOR IT IS KAL-EL'S ONLY CHANCE OF *SURVIVAL.*

OUR SON. THE LAST OF THE EL FAMILY.

THE LAST SON OF KRYPTON.

...

MOTHER? FA...

...FATHER?

"KAL-EL?"

THAT'S *ME.*

MY NAME IS *KAL-EL*...OF *KRYPTON.*

LAST OF YOUR RACE.

WHICH MAKES THIS *GENOCIDE.*

I'M DOING YOU A *FAVOR,* SUPERMAN. IT'S *AGONY* TO BE *ALONE* IN THIS WORLD.

MERCI◊iid ◊!!!!, ◦◦ó◊!'T ◈ óAPPENING--?

◦!!!◊-◦◦ai ◦◦!◈ ◊-◦8ó◊T! 'Tó◊-◈ -◈ 'Tó◊♀ ♀◊□!

YOU WEREN'T ALWAYS, LEX. YOU MADE YOUR CHOICE.

AND SO HAVE I.

GOODBYE, MY SON.

FORGIVE ME.

◊!!!!, ◦◦ó◊'il □I-□I◊ 'T ◦◦♀ ai-◈'Tó◊?

YOU'VE NOTHING TO BE SORRY FOR.

YOU GAVE KAL-EL ALL A FATHER CAN GIVE HIS SON.

YOU GAVE HIM EVERY CHANCE.

BUT WILL THAT BE ENOUGH?

WE'LL NEVER KNOW.

NO.

NO NO NO... *LISTEN...*

www.dailyplanet.met/index.html

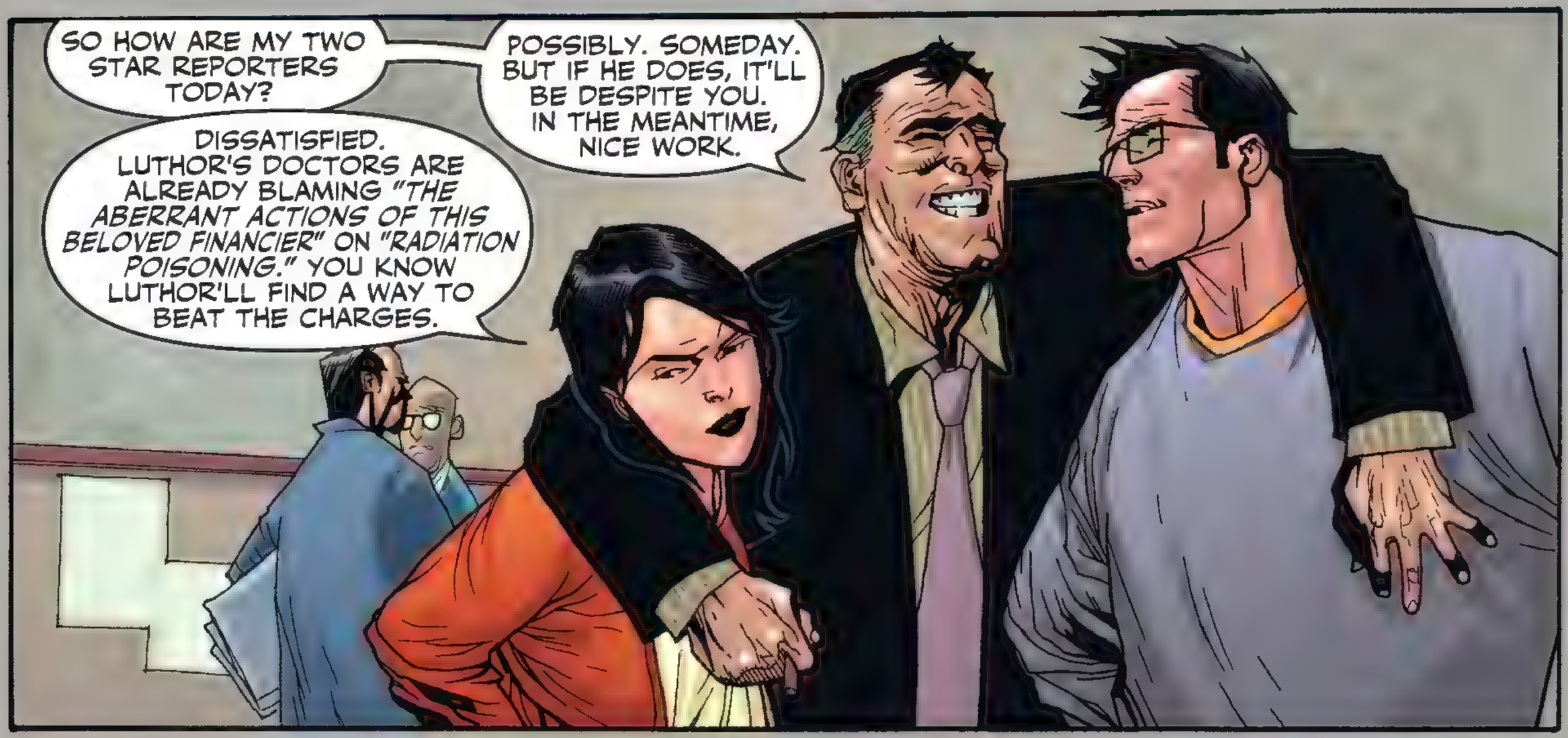
DAILY PLANET

LUTHOR INDICTED

by Lois Lane and Clark Kent

Despite protests of innocence, astrobiologist Lex Luthor was charged today with multiple counts of masterminding terrorist action disguised as an “alien invasion” on Metropolis.

Superman Saves Victims, Aids Cleanup
Still Wanted for Questioning



THANKS FOR TALKING ME UP. PROBABLY WHY I STILL HAVE A JOB.

NO. YOU STILL HAVE A JOB BECAUSE I CADGED YOUR CRYBABY ***RESIGNATION LETTER*** BEFORE PERRY FOUND IT.

AND, MY GOD, WHO TAUGHT YOU ***PUNCTUATION,*** MR. ***COMMA-SPLICE?***

WELL, AS LONG AS I'M HERE TO STAY, MAYBE...MAYBE YOU AND I COULD GO TO A...UMM...I MEAN, IF YOU'RE NOT...***SEEING*** ANYONE...

YOU ***DID*** JUST HEAR ME REFER TO YOU AS A ***CRYBABY,*** RIGHT?

SO NOTED.

WOULD IT HELP IF I WERE ABLE TO LEAP TALL BUILDINGS IN A SINGLE BOUND?

I-- THAT'S--

N-NO! WHAT ARE YOU IMPLYING? THAT I HAVE SOME SORT OF L-LAME ***CRUSH*** ON ***SUPERMAN?*** WH-WHAT ARE YOUR ***SOURCES?*** DID HE SAY SOMETHING?

WHAT, TO ***ME?*** COME ON, YOU EVER SEE US ***TOGETHER?***

SO NOTED.

JUST BE CAREFUL. PEOPLE STILL AREN'T SURE WHAT THEY THINK OF HIM.

THEY'LL COME AROUND. YOU WATCH WHAT HAPPENS THE NEXT TIME SOMEONE TRIES TO CO-OPT THAT ***SYMBOL.***

PEOPLE ***KNOW*** NOW, IT STANDS FOR COURAGE. IT STANDS FOR HOPE.

IT STANDS FOR ***SUPERMAN.***

"AND THE WHOLE WORLD WILL *REMEMBER* THAT."

LIKRRRKSKEN... KRRRKSK STENKRRRKSK...

MOTHER... FATHER...

...I MADE IT.

I KRRRKSK

AFTERWORD

From time to time, I travel to universities and libraries to deliver a prepared presentation on the Man of Steel. Takes about forty minutes. I walk the audience through a heavily illustrated PowerPoint deck, followed by a free-form Q&A that can cover anything from Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster's childhoods to Clark Kent's Social Security number. As you might imagine, it's one of my favorite things in the world to do. I've never clocked just exactly how long I can talk about Superman in one stretch, but you should probably bring a sandwich. Still, whatever direction it takes, the presentation always concludes with my thoughts on why Superman matters to us, stays with us, in a way that our other childhood friends of fiction do not, and here are those thoughts distilled down to three words: *he empowers us*.

Let me explain. Imagine how uncomplicated your life would be if you had the absolute power of Superman. How *easy* everything would be. You could glide through the air effortlessly. You'd have super-strength and invulnerable skin. You could wring diamonds out of coal or bat bullets aside like they were houseflies. You could save people from natural disasters or from crime. You could knock down bullies. You could spy on your enemies. You could see and hear all the secrets of your friends and loved ones. You could dominate anyone, seize any throne, rule any nation. You could have anything on Earth, *take* anything on Earth. You could, with one heat-vision stare, eliminate anyone who displeased you in any way.

It would be easy.

People abuse power every day. It's easy for them. Authority figures overstep. Politicians whip up bigotry and hate. Wall Street megabankers steal from honest people. So if Superman's more powerful than any of them, why doesn't he do those kinds of things, take the easy route? He could. No one could stop him. Why isn't he even tempted? Is it because he has an iron will? Is it because of his upbringing, his moral fortitude?

No. It's because that's not why he exists. Superman exists to tell us something as children that we get to carry with us our whole lives forward. By the way Superman uses power, he teaches us what I would argue is the single most important moral lesson there is: that true power is *kind*. It is restrained. It is compassionate. Or, to put it another way, kindness is *true* power. Compassion is true power.

That's what I mean when I say he empowers us. Whether we realize it or not, every time we see that "S," whether it's on a T-shirt or a ball cap or a movie screen, it's a reminder of how powerful we feel when we use kindness and empathy to make our lives and the lives of others better. When we exercise those core humanistic values to connect with one another in a world where hate and callousness just divide us. That's why Superman matters. That's why he endures.

And that, to me, is the core of *Superman: Birthright*: how and why a being from another planet grows up to symbolize the best of humanity. It's my favorite of all my works because it's my love letter to someone who—real or fictional—has been the role model I have needed since I was a boy. It's been my chance to give back to someone who's given so much to me. I hope you enjoyed it.

SUPERMAN'S PAL,
MARK WAID
LOS ANGELES, 2022

REIMAGINING THE MAN OF TOMORROW

For the project that was eventually titled Birthright, *Mark Waid was asked to refresh and reimagine Superman's origins for 21st-century readers. Both that request and Waid's own instincts mandated that he stay faithful to the core concepts envisioned over 60 years ago by creators Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster without ignoring the subsequent creative contributions of such pioneers as Mort Weisinger, Elliot S! Maggin, John Byrne, Marv Wolfman, and Jerry Ordway, among others. Asking to work with artist Leinil Yu, Mark set to the task of rethinking every aspect of Superman from the ground up. What follows are excerpts from Mark's proposal along with Leinil Yu's concept art.*

"Who am I and why am I here?"

That's our keynote, our through line. Rocketed from the doomed planet Krypton as an infant, Kal-El is adopted by a kindly Kansas farm couple and rechristened "Clark Kent." His parents raise him as best they can. They do an exemplary job of instilling him with a strong ethical and moral sense and work hard to make Clark feel human...

...but he's not. He's different. Following high school, the boy begins a personal and desperate globe-spanning vision quest, eager to find out where he does belong. While he's been blessed with the incredible gift of superhuman powers, those powers cannot help but distance him from the rest of humanity. In fact, young Clark is painfully aware every moment of every day that every single message the universe sends him regarding his life on Earth is this: *You don't belong here.*

He has vague, dreamlike memories of his lost home-world—particularly every evening at dusk, when he feels an inexplicable sadness and longing as he watches the setting sun turn red on the horizon—but nothing's concrete. The rocket that brought him here carries few clues; there's a device that, Clark assumes, is some sort of message medium, but the rigors of his voyage all but ruined it, and there's very little he can glean from it—a phrase here, a hazy image there. The only certainty is that while Clark was raised as one of us, he's *not* one of us, and this is a lesson that's hammered into him time after time after time after time until he finally comes to the conclusion that maybe embracing his alien heritage, whatever it *is*, isn't just a possibility; maybe it's his destiny.

Over the course of our series, Superman's character arc will be that of in fact *deciding* who he is rather than letting it be decided *for* him. He'll come to his own conclusions about why he's here, what he's supposed to do with his gifts, and how he can best integrate the identities given him by the two worlds he calls home. Along the way, we witness his debut in costume (and give it a contemporary rationale), we meet the supporting cast and (knock on wood) give them a few new dimensions, and we bring Luthor on stage. But most of all, we make every effort to answer the two questions I'm most often asked about Superman: "Why does he do what he does?" and "How can I possibly identify with someone like that?"

SUPERMAN

Not long ago, I heard a true story on NPR's *This American Life* about a man in Washington State who, for a while, regularly went about his daily life—shopping, movie-going, traveling—while wearing a Superman costume. I don't remember his last name, but his first name was "Mark." That much is unfortunate because now anyone from my high school graduating class who also heard the story and remembers only the guy's first name now thinks it's me. Nevertheless, it was a good, well-rounded story in the NPR fashion because it ran the gamut from mocking to poignant to philosophical. But one moment forced me to think about Superman in a way I *never had* before. The reporter, tagging along with "Superman" in public, noted that he tended to be most warmly accepted by people in their thirties and forties—or, as the reporter put it, "the people who grew up with Superman."

Oh, my God.

Yeah, we all know that kids can't find comics to buy anymore and we can't reach our audience and blah blah every pros-in-the-bar-after-the-convention conversation ever...but to hear it put like *that* and know instantly that it was true was quite a wake-up call for me. There are entire generations to whom Superman is about as meaningful and significant as Woody Woodpecker or Marmaduke...and to be honest, I don't think it has nearly as much to do with comics' availability as it does with the undeniable fact that the Gen-X and Gen-next audience perceive the world around them as far more dangerous, far more unfair, and far more screwed-up than we ever did. To them, and probably more accurately so than we'd like to believe, their world is one where capitalism always wins, where politicians always lie, where sports idols take drugs and beat their wives, where white picket fences are suspect because they hide dark things—and to them, that's the world Superman *represents* and the status quo he *defends*.

For some time now—and even more so in this post-9/11 world, I'd argue—our audience gifts its excitement and its loyalty to heroes who *aren't* agents of the status quo. Young people want to read about action heroes who take *action*—who give voice to their anger at the world and who act to change the landscape. Our audience is of a generation that doesn't want to identify with "living symbols" who exist to "inspire."

To them, the moral visionaries and inspirational figures of history—from Bobby Kennedy to Martin Luther King to Gandhi—got the same reward for their efforts: a bullet in the head.

No, our audience wants to live vicariously through heroes who symbolize their rebellious spirit and understand their frustrations. And, luckily for us, in 1938, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster gave us a hero who did *just that.*

I don't have to remind anyone reading this that Superman exploded in pop culture at a time when he was genuinely a champion of the weak and oppressed. When he fought against the system and was a little more Clint Eastwood than Christopher Reeve. I'm not for *one second* arguing that Superman should go back to punching out wife-beaters or throwing enemy pilots to their doom or otherwise so completely and thoroughly take the law into his own hands...and absolutely no one is a bigger fan of the Silver Agey "Big, Blue Boy Scout" Superman than I am, no one... but I really, genuinely do believe that he's increasingly marginalized in a world where kids have to go through metal detectors to get to school and that the next Superman renaissance will come when our audience once more feels it can connect with a hero who acts like defending Metropolis from Brainiac isn't the only way to make a difference. That's what Siegel and Shuster came to the table with, and that's what we have to put forth here.

Yes, Superman combats street crime and alien invaders and natural disasters—but he also takes an active stand against political and corporate corruption and tackles, at least allegorically, 21st-century problems. And he shows a temper when justified, when innocent lives are put in deliberate danger. If you're on the side of the angels, he's the greatest friend you ever had. If, on the other hand, you're his enemy, *God help you.*

THE COSTUME

When Clark finally decides to stop avoiding his alien heritage and to instead embrace it, the costume becomes his cultural touchstone, a garment that honors Krypton and serves as a constant reminder to Superman of who he (thinks he) is. Its design is based on Clark's vague memories of Krypton—Leinil will redesign a Krypton that ISN'T retro-Silver Age but on which capes and boots were nonetheless the predominant fashion. The suit itself is made from that in which Jor-El and Lara wrapped baby Kal-El as they placed him in his rocket: the flag of Krypton, a red, yellow, and blue banner centered around a design that looks for all the world like a stylized letter "S."

Not only is the costume a symbol of Kal-El's "tribal colors," if you will, it serves an even more important practical function. One of the reasons ordinary people get chills when street-clothes Clark uses his powers openly is that it makes them retroactively paranoid. They feel he's been "hiding among them," wonder if he's been "spying" on them. He's been keeping those powers a secret? That's a BIG secret. How can they trust him now, let their guard down around him?

The costume, by contrast, you can see coming *a mile away*. It *screams* "Here I am! Look at me!" It's hard to accuse a man in a big red cape of "sneaking around." Superman's costume is bright, it's maskless, and it's an open invitation for the people of Metropolis to do what Superman most *needs* them to do: *trust him*. The message is that, as Superman, he has *nothing* to hide.

CLARK KENT

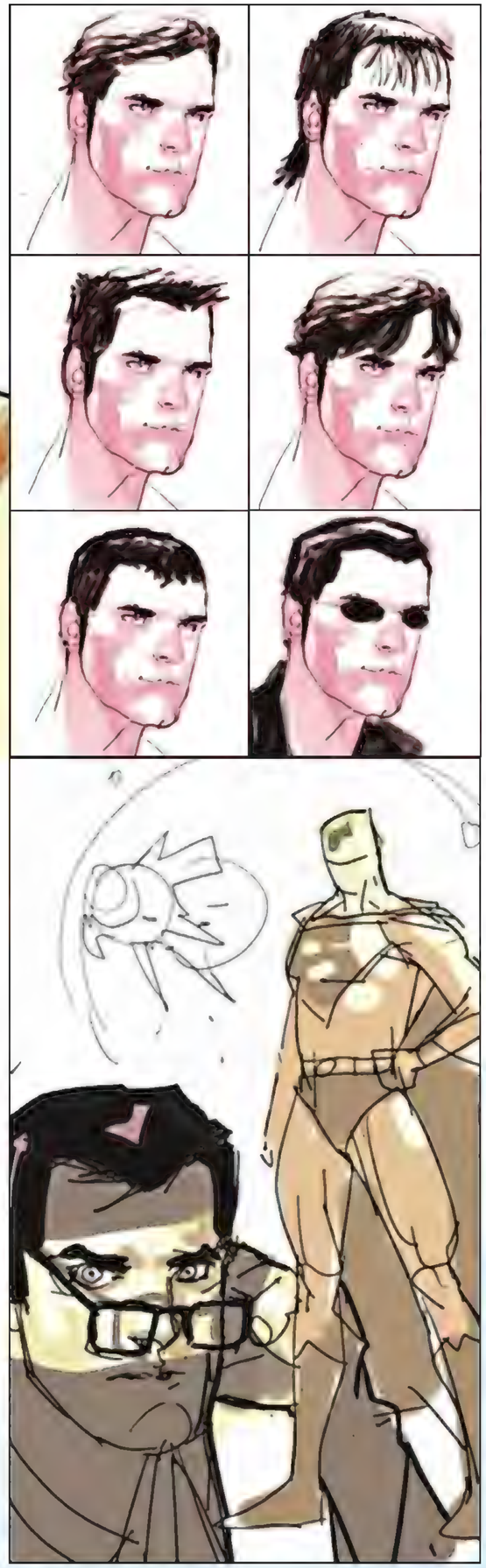
"...who, *disguised as* Clark Kent..."

Don't look at me. I didn't make it up. Siegel and Shuster did. Superman's the real guy, Clark's the disguise, and that's one of the masterstrokes that made Superman unique and brilliant for so long. One crucial key to Superman is that when he's wearing the suit, when he's flying around, he's not playing a role. He's not "playing" at being a superhero. This is who he is and who the Kents raised him to be—an angelic, unselfish champion who uses his gifts for the betterment of mankind. Wearing the suit simply means that he can act openly without fear of alienating others. "Metropolis Clark," on the other hand, is a fabrication that serves a critical purpose—no matter how old, how mature Superman gets, he'll never lose that basic human need to be accepted by his peers. Moreover, one of the fundaments of the world's leading religions all throughout history is that despite our individuality, there exists on some level a connection between all the things in the universe, and one cannot exist meaningfully while denying that connection. Superman's a smart and worldly man. He knows this.

Clark allows Superman to immerse himself in humanity and thus never lose sight of his calling. The Clark disguise includes, at Ma Kent's insistence, glasses that help take attention away from Superman's most distinctive facial characteristic: blue eyes that would put Paul Newman's to shame, that are almost other-worldly in the compassion and warmth they radiate.

The drawback of being Clark, of course, is that it's during those times Kal-El has to be *most* careful. Above all, he wants to go unnoticed, to be one of those unremarkable, almost faceless guys in the office who no one thinks ill of but who you can never remember for sure whether or not he was at the office Christmas party. He has to be on-guard 24/7 against making any sort of physical slip-up. He can't play pickup basketball. He can't volunteer to help you move next weekend. Most of all, he can never, ever be confrontational, and that's the behavior that so easily gets misunderstood by the insensitive. Clark's not really a wimp; he's just mild mannered, slightly aloof, and VERY tightly wrapped. When he screws up, people can die. Clark brings Kal-El so close to being human, so tantalizingly close...but never are we more "human" than when we make mistakes, and mistakes are the things Clark can least afford.

There's also another sad irony to Clark; and it's one that reaches right to the heart of every adolescent out there: in order to have any sort of genuine relationship with people, Superman has to be *someone he's not.*



As much as I love Christopher Reeve's Clark, he was a cartoon and is too over-the-top for the purposes of this series. Clark doesn't have to be an overblown drama queen, but neither can he be so super-successful he has the world in his pocket. We must not forget why he was created in the first place—to be a touchstone. To be the half of Superman which readers can actually relate to, because we all (*especially* comics fans) want to believe that even though we may be put upon and bullied by the world from time to time, we know what those who pick on us or look down at us don't—that if they could see behind our glasses, they'd see a Superman.

Clark's the sob sister of the *Daily Planet*, if not of all Metropolis. Despite his attempts to keep a low profile, compassion radiates from him, and people pick up on that almost unconsciously. Friends and total strangers alike constantly confess their plights and problems to poor Clark. They don't want advice. They just want someone to listen, and no one listens better than him. This aspect of his character naturally opens up the occasional avenue to the smaller human-interest story, which can be investigated by Clark the reporter.

Clark, like Superman, despite his farm background, has learned to be a vegetarian. Clark recycles, lives modestly, and in everyday ways lives a very environmentally friendly life.

LOIS LANE

When we first meet her, Lois Lane is already one of the greatest and most famous reporters in the world. (Superman deserves a Super-Woman.) She's that good, and she's that good because (as is obvious even to those without x-ray vision) her Hildy-Johnson, front-page, smartass attitude is about three angstroms thick, and beneath it is a woman of remarkable compassion. That she never loses sight of the fact that she's not the story is probably the only reason she's not a TV anchorwoman whose ratings could eclipse Brokaw's.

The (largely insincere) cynicism with which she confronts new people and new situations is a necessary defense mechanism, because being a leader in her field brings with it a lot of stuff that's a pain in the ass. Everyone wants something from her, everyone's pulling at her all the time, she always feels like she has twice as much responsibility as she ever signed on for—or, to put it more simply, the bigger you are, the tighter and more smothering the world around you.

So imagine her delight to find a man who can fly.

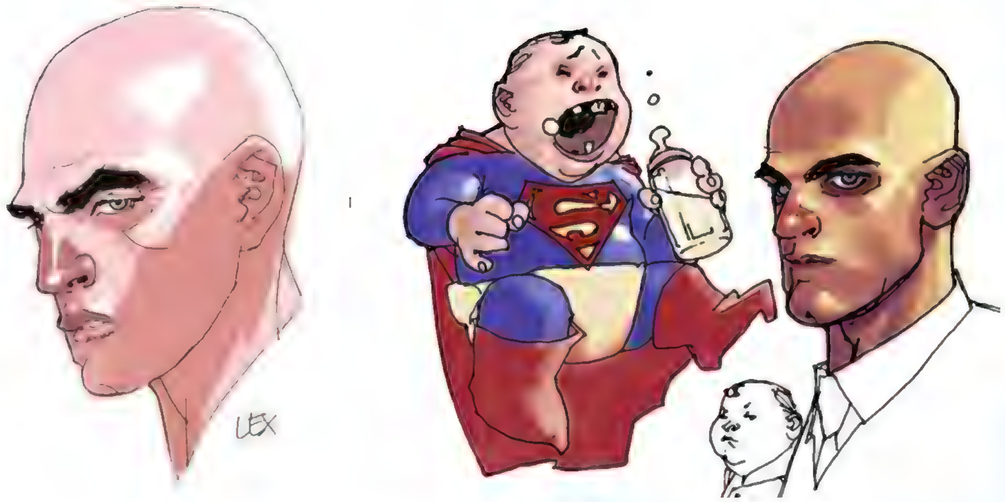
Lois is attracted to Superman, at least initially, because he symbolizes freedom. He can rise above the world, and when she's with him, she can, too. Beyond that—well, without making her unlikable, someone of her stature does have a slight streak of arrogance. She's dated kings and multimillionaires and has been bored by them all, but now there's *this* guy—*and*, unlike that pesky fellow in the office (What's his name? Kent?), Superman's playing hard to get.

What does Superman love about Lois? Her compassion. Her intense dedication to a job that, when done right, makes the world a better place. The way she constantly surprises him, a man who is almost impossible to surprise. And, in no small part, that when he's Clark, she's hard to get.

(Note: At some point early on, the first time Lois sees that Superman has super-senses, she ought to observe to him that he'd make a great reporter.)

MA KENT

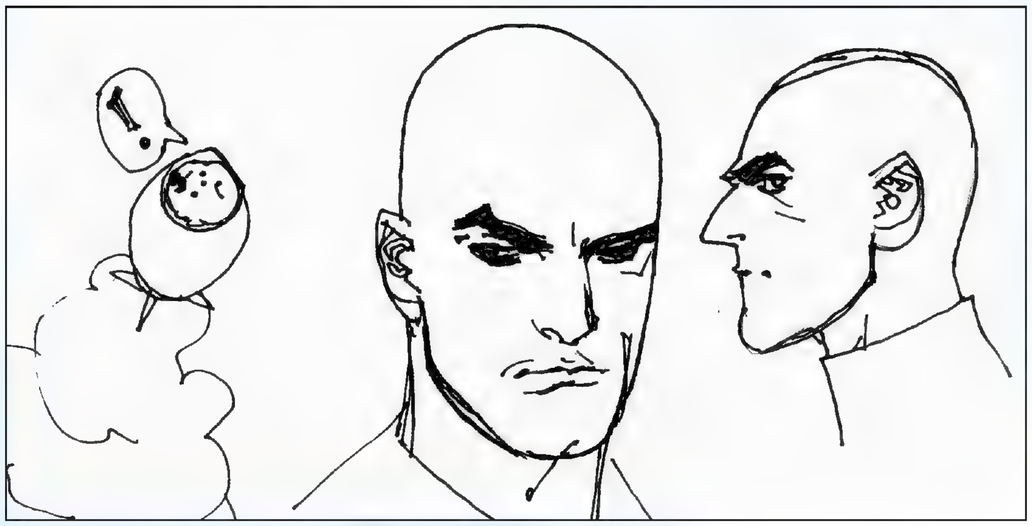
Not to exclude Pa, but there's something new I want to add to Martha. Parents with autistic children are forced to become authorities in developmental learning. Parents whose children aspire to Olympic medals become expert coaches. In the years following Clark's adoption, Martha Kent took it upon herself to learn everything there is to know about UFOs—where did this baby come from?—and it's something she studies to this day. (And don't forget to ask me about the amazing untold story that should come out of this someday—not in this series, but someday.)

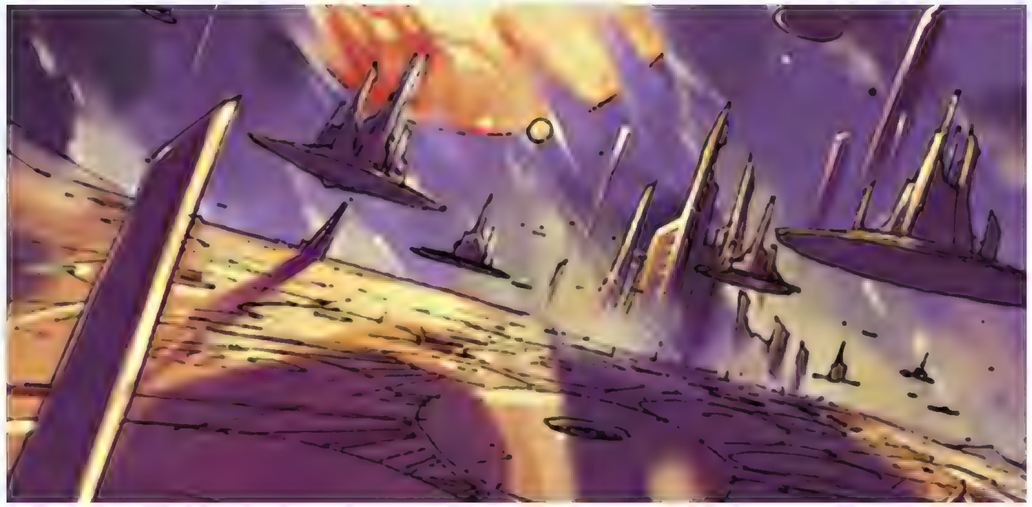


LEX LUTHOR

Despite my own personal prejudices, I say we leave Lex the criminal businessman he's been for the past 17 years. The *Lois & Clark* producers liked it, the WB cartoon guys liked it...so clearly, it works on some level. My concern is that, at least in my eyes, the fact that Luthor's allowed to operate uncontested for *years* makes Superman look ineffectual. Superman knows full well that every day Lex Luthor is a free man, someone somewhere is being hurt by him. John Byrne's *Man of Steel* series established that Superman did succeed once in putting Luthor behind bars, though not for long. I'd like to see the same happen here, though at the end of our story, but I'm getting slightly ahead of myself: Luthor, here more than ever, shields himself from Superman by continually drawing moral and ethical lines that he believes Superman will not cross—those that pose the kind of questions Superman actively wrestles with as he defines his role. In fact, I think early on, Superman surprises Luthor (and us) with how far he's willing to bend the law for an obviously greater good (though never, I hasten to add, ever to any degree that would disrespect Superman or DC Comics). Ultimately, however, Luthor hides behind a moral/ethical line that Superman knows deep down he cannot cross—

—so one of our big surprises at story's end is that it's not Superman who puts Luthor away, it's investigative reporter Clark Kent.





THE FLAG OF KRYPTON

The entirety of *Superman: Birthright* is built around the same thing [the TV series] *Smallville* is built around, the same thing that ALL teenage lives are built around, the one bonding element we can count on our audience to find in common with this alien being who can fly: the search for identity. Clark, like all of us were (or are, or will be at one time or another), is desperately trying to figure out who he is and what his place is in this world. In Clark's case, obviously, his quest for identity is complicated by the fact that he's of *two* worlds. For the first 25 years of his life (as per established continuity), Clark Kent has worked very, very hard to assimilate—hiding his powers and trying to adjust reality to fit what his parents and his heart tell him—that he's one of us. But he's *not*. Clark was raised as an Earthman, but he *isn't*, and as he wanders the world as a young adult in his jeans and plaid shirts or whatever and keeps stumbling into trouble spots where he's forced to be Super, that's a lesson that's hammered into him time after time after time after time. Finally, in *Birthright*, he comes to the conclusion that maybe embracing his alien heritage rather than trying to run *away* from it may well be his destiny. Ultimately, how he gradually manages to carve out an identity that accommodates *both* of the worlds he knows is our story.

The Flag of Krypton figures *heavily* into this, and the way we're playing it is *not* merely some whimsical change I want to make for the sake of change. The flag is his cultural touchstone, a constant reminder to himself of who he is (at least by half). Something Clark has seen over and over again in his global travel is the significance of "tribal colors." It's a fairly common concept—the Navajo, the Filipinos, the Afghans, and many other nationalities hand down through the generations colors and styles of the tribe. What they wear, they wear to connect to their ancestors, to symbolize and remind them of their heritage. As the last survivor of his race, Clark knows the Flag of Krypton with its "S"-styled crest is the ultimate—and only remaining—symbol of his people. He doesn't know for certain why it was sent along with him, but maybe (he reasons), maybe it was because he's not supposed to let the memory of his great, grand homeworld die.

That's what I'm getting at. That if the "S" is just something Jonathan Kent cobbled up out of thin air so he can call his son "Superman," not only does it have no resonance, it makes no sense. Why would Clark think he needs something like that on his shirt? He's a humble man. Likewise, if the "S" is an El family crest, as cool an idea as that was in *Superman: The Movie*, I will argue until the end of time that Superman's destiny is not to carry on one family's lineage near as much as it is to carry on for an entire culture, an entire race. We don't call him the Last Son of the El Family. We call him the Last Son of Krypton. [Or, to put it another way, the central question, not only of this story but of the Superman mythos in any incarnation, is not "Am I an El or a Kent?" It's "Am I an Earthman or a Kryptonian?"]

I'm not putting forth this change in the mythos out of disrespect or arrogance. We all know that if it were up to me, we'd be back to having him wrapped in baby blankets. But it is so, so much stronger if Clark is swaddled in the flag so he will not forget where he comes from. Baby blankets are a convenience. The flag is a *sign* that he has a *destiny*. And, again, that is the *core* of this story.

MARK WAID

Mark Waid, a *New York Times* bestselling author, bought his first DC comic at age four and never stopped. After serving the company as an associate editor in the late 1980s, he went on to pursue a full-time career as a comics writer and has, in the 30-plus years since, published nearly 2000 stories. Among them are his collaboration with artist Alex Ross, *Kingdom Come*, one of the all-time highest-selling American graphic novels, and long runs on *Flash*, *Justice League*, and many other superhero and humor titles. Currently, he serves as publisher for Humanoids U.S. He lives in Santa Monica but never goes to the beach because his Irish skin would burst into flame.

LEINIL FRANCIS YU

At age 19, Leinil Francis Yu broke into comics with Marvel Comics' *Wolverine* and eventually *X-Men* and *Uncanny X-Men* while doing numerous covers for Wizard and Dark Horse Comics. Rumors of becoming a rich kingpin in his homeland, the Philippines, began to emerge. This was later found to be completely untrue. A move to DC Comics/WildStorm produced the critically acclaimed book *High Roads* and the historic event *Superman: Birthright*.

GERRY ALANGUILAN

An architect by profession, Gerry Alanguilan preferred to work in comics. His inking credits in American comics included *New X-Men*, *The Darkness*, *Wetworks*, *X-Force*, *Fantastic Four*, and *Superman*. He also pencilled and inked *Ochlocrat* for Comics Conspiracy in 2002 and an adaptation of Bram Stoker's *The Judge's House* for Graphics Classics the following year. In the Philippines, Gerry wrote and illustrated numerous titles including *Timawa*, *The Dead Heart*, *Crest Hut Butt Shop*, and *Wasted*, and he was a strong advocate of promoting the Philippine comic book industry. He passed away in December 2019.

DAVE McCAIG

Born in Winnipeg, Canada, Dave McCaig is an Inkpot-award-winning colorist who has bounced around from Vancouver to LA to New York, and now lives with his family, two cats, and pet squirrel in Toronto. He's known in DC circles for coloring books like *Superman: Birthright*, *Supergirl*, and a number of Vertigo titles like *American Vampire*, *Lucifer*, and *Northlanders*. He was the color supervisor on 2004's *The Batman* animated series, and drew a number of covers for its tie-in comic, *The Batman Strikes!* In his spare time, Dave has been an Olympic torch bearer, ridden his bicycle 1,200 miles over the Rocky Mountains, completed the New York City Triathlon, and has ridden three elephants.

THE LEGEND RETOLD

The whole world knows that Superman fights for truth and justice... but *why* does he? What drives a farm boy from Kansas to divide his life between posing as a mild-mannered reporter and embarking on a career as a superhero?

Superman: Birthright The Deluxe Edition by MARK WAID (*The Flash*), LEINIL FRANCIS YU (*Avengers*), GERRY ALANGUILAN (*Elmer*), and DAVE McCAIG (*American Vampire*) tells the exciting origin of the Man of Steel, from his time wandering the world searching for purpose to his first day at the *Daily Planet* and making his public debut in Metropolis. This lush retelling incorporates his vast and colorful legend into a brand-new epic tale...a battle to save both the legacy of Krypton and the future of Metropolis! Included in this edition is the original 12-part miniseries plus a new afterword by Waid reflecting on the enduring legacy of the Man of Tomorrow.

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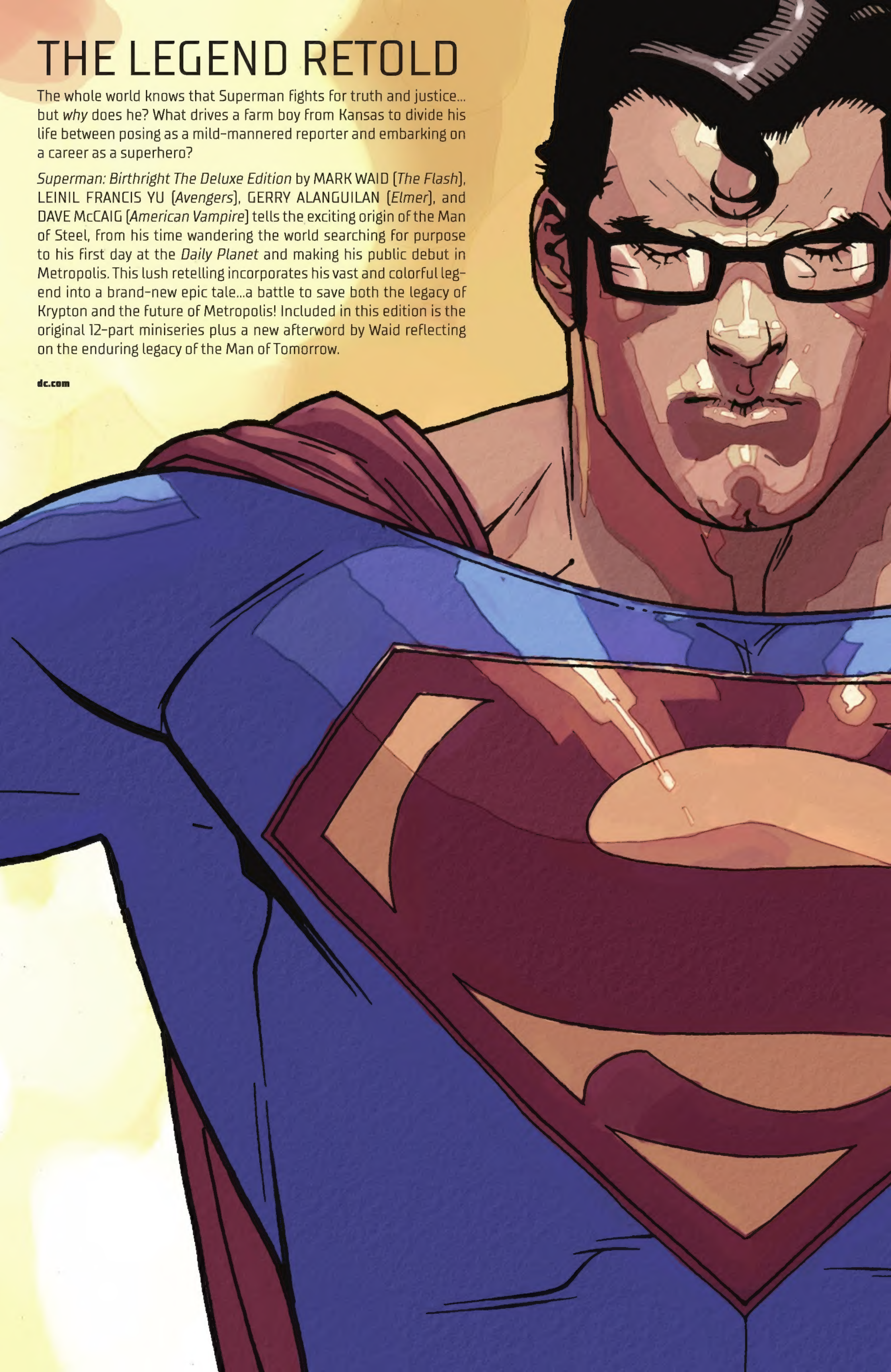

SON OF ULTRON

"THIS FAN... THIS MONSTER!"